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# **JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND AESTHETICS**

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# Syncretism and Style: The Art of the Gandhara

JANE DURAN

## Abstract

The notion of syncretism in visual style is fleshed out, with special allusion to India's Gandhara school, and to other works with Asian and South Asian provenance. Rowland, McMahon, and Muller-Ebeling are cited, and it is concluded that the Gandhara school offers work much less exemplary of the notion of syncretism than is commonly thought.

Attention has recently been drawn to the art of the Gandhara school in Northern Central Asia because of the destruction of some prominent pieces of work representative of the style by the Taliban. Although art historians have long appreciated the art of India and its environs, many Westerners fail to learn how to distinguish among various schools, and the region as a whole is often unknown or misunderstood, even by those more sophisticated in their art historical training.<sup>1</sup>

The Gandhara school is significantly different, in provenance and in style, from most of what a Westerner is likely to see in a museum, or even on the subcontinent, insofar as the label "India" is involved. This work flourished from roughly the first to fifth century A.D., in what is today Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Punjab region of India itself. It is a style derived from the presence in that region at that time of a number of soldiers, scholars and prominent individuals from the Roman empire, and it represents an unusual attempt at merger and syncretism of various sorts of styles. Prominent among pieces from this school are various portrayals of the Buddha, most of which do not resemble any other portrayals likely to be seen. At first glance, they may strike the viewer as belonging more to the Hellenistic schools with which they are sometimes associated, and they certainly bear the hallmarks of Greco-Roman stylization. Rowland himself notes that "There never was any real fusion of Indian and Western ideals in Gandhara."<sup>2</sup> It will be the purpose of this paper to examine the concept of syncretism, especially as applied to the art of this region. What is the meaning of this term? If we see two styles failing to meld—if the object strikes the viewer as not an amalgam, but an attempt at overlay—has syncretism been achieved? These and similar conceptual questions are the results of study of the art of the Gandhara school.

## I

Rowland feels that he is able to make the claim that there was no genuine “fusion” in the Gandhara style because, in brief, much of the sculpture can best be described as Indian (typically, Buddhist) subjects conveyed in a Greco-Roman manner. That the Buddha figures, in particular, are strikingly at variance with, for example, the Buddhas of the later classical Gupta period, cannot be denied. And yet it would not be accurate to say that a given Gandhara Buddha is simply a Roman icon in the pose of the Buddha. What is most striking about the Gandhara work is that styles may be pointed out as at work, all at once, and yet quite independently of each other.

For instance, the “Seated Buddha from Takht-I-Bahi,” plate 34 in Rowland, is described as having an “Apollonian facial type,” and “deeply —pleated drapery reminiscent of Roman workmanship.”<sup>3</sup> Rowland goes on to say that this figure is essentially a “draped Greco-Roman adolescent in an unusual pose.”<sup>4</sup> This description, if we can go along with the author’s terminology, certainly buttresses his overall contention that the Gandhara school represents a comparative lack of fusion. And, indeed, study of the figure in question reveals that we recognize the figure as an attempt at the Buddha largely because of the pose of the figure (seated, with a type of a typical mudra, or gesture). Not only the relatively pronounced folds of the drapery, but the rendering of the nose and all the facial features are in the style of Western art.

A counterargument could be constructed, however, and it is at this point that we have to contend with the meaning of a term such as “syncretism”, at least insofar as the visual arts are concerned. If such a notion is to have any content, it must be related to two conceptual issues: (1) the first is that there must be at least two or more discernible styles under consideration [else, obviously, the question does not arise]; (2) the second is that it must be at least minimally possible to pick these styles out of the “fused” art, or otherwise one would not be able to say that something incorporating both styles had occurred. When examined, closely, the notion of an artistic fusion of styles, or of a syncretism, has an air of paradox about it. There is a very fine line between being able to discern the existence of the two (or more) styles, and the plain appearance of two styles incongruously juxtaposed together in a way that does not admit of fusion.

Clearly, Rowland wants to claim that the latter sort of phenomenon is what is occurring in the Gandhara school. The counterposing question is thus: what would a genuine “fusion” of two such disparate styles look like? How would the observer be able to tell that there were indeed two styles, unless they are so marked—as Rowland claims—that there “never was any real fusion.”<sup>5</sup>

Interestingly enough, the conceptual apparatus to help us out here may be available from a perusal of work done in a contemporary time period. We are now, in the latter part of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty-first century, much more comfortable with addressing what are usually termed postmodernist styles. In a piece on postmodern architecture, David Goldblatt has written:

Pluralism” can mean (1) eclecticism, i.e., the incorporation of elements of various styles into a single architectural project; or it may mean

simply (2) juxtaposition of two—perhaps a few—architectural styles, coexisting side by side or in relative proximity, but each clearly and distinctly independent.<sup>6</sup>

Because of the similarity of modes of presentation, the claims that Goldblatt makes for architecture would appear to be directly translatable to sculpture, or even relief. The question is: is the hypothesized fusion desired by Rowland closer to the first alternative, or the second?

## II

We might be tempted to think that what Rowland has in mind as an ideal is an approximation of Goldblatt’s first take on pluralism, the incorporation of various elements. Presumably we can pick those elements out to some extent, but not to the extent that typifies the Gandhara school. It would be too naïve to say that there are no examples of genuine fusion or syncretism to be found, but it remains an intriguing fact that most of the examples cited—at least, in sculpture or relief work—tend toward one extreme or the other.

The Gandhara school leaves us, as Rowland has stated, with the uneasy sensation that one style has been grafted on to the subject matter of another. But the other extreme is something like loss of discernible style. This, too, has its obvious exemplars.

One such exemplar, noted by many commentators is the relief work style of Indonesia. Although an exhibit during the past decade or so at Washington’s National Gallery gave major focus to this work, much of the work is virtually indistinguishable from work done in India. One commentator has described the origins of the work in this way:

Beginning around the eighth century, Indonesia experienced an artistic flowering that lasted more than seven hundred years. This archipelago of more than three thousand islands, lying across ancient trade routes between India and China, was a commercial and cultural crossroads. Maritime contacts with the Asian mainland brought Hinduism and Buddhism to the islands, and soon the artistic traditions of India were known there as well. Artists in the archipelago responded creatively to these influences, which they reinterpreted according to local beliefs and aesthetic ideals. The result was a new Indonesian art that survives today primarily in works in stone and metal, materials that resist the destructive forces of Indonesia’s equatorial climate.<sup>7</sup>

Visually, many pieces of work from Indonesia bear a marked resemblance to work from the Chola school of South India, or to other work from the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Indeed, it is easy to concoct a slippery slope argument to the effect that, if one did not antecedently know where a given piece of work was from, it might not be possible, with certainty to declare that it was either Indonesian or Indian.

The point of the foregoing analysis is simply to assist us in doing the

conceptual work necessary to get a handle on some ideal of syncretism or fusion. So far, we have come to the conclusion that the Gandhara work—and here, it does seem fair to give Rowland credit for having latched onto an insight—is at one end of a spectrum. It might very well be argued that portions of the reliefs available from Indonesia are at another.

If the notion of fusion and/or syncretism is to have any meaning at all in the visual arts (and in standard terms of definition, the two are usually more or less synonymous), then, as we have indicated, there has to be enough separation, so to speak, between the styles so that it is still possible to pick out at least remnants of the styles for purposes of identification, but there has to be sufficient overlap so that, instead of winding up with a fusion, we are left with a sort of unhappy grafting. It may very well be the case that such a syncretism is far rarer than the use of the terms in many artistic endeavors would indicate. The question then becomes whether or not there is an exemplar of fusion that serves our purposes in trying to come to grips with the notion.

### III

Because much of the artistic tradition of South and Central Asia is foreign to us, and because it is the result of much cross-cultural fertilization in the region, it should come as no surprise that perhaps one of the best examples of such syncretism is from still another Asian area, the Tibeto-Nepali region. The extensive travels of religious figures in this Himalayan area are documented not only by Westerners, but are themselves part and parcel of the mythography of the area.<sup>8</sup> What are usually known as “Tibetan *tankas*” (or, in some variations, *thankas* or even *thangkas*) come from a wide variety of cultures and geographically demarcatable areas in the Himalayas, such as Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan, and are produced by such varying groups as the Newari, the Bhutanese, and the Tamang, a group that (like the others, to some extent) straddles the region.

Muller-Ebeling and Ratsch, in their recent large work on the artistic and shamanistic traditions of this region, note that colors, stylistic variations such as flat penciling, and typical uses of borders frequently allow the discerning eye to differentiate the various provenances of examined *tankas*, but, to the uninitiated, differences would be too small to be of much help. More importantly, all of the *tankas* are similar enough in size, scope and theme that they can certainly be placed under the rubric “*tanka*.”<sup>9</sup> Muller-Ebeling and Ratsch are concerned in their work to try to dispel the notion that “Tibetan *tanka*,” as a term, is an accurate designator of geographical origin. As they point out, it is often a very inaccurate guide to the actual place or site at which a work was done, but it is, easily, an appropriate guide to the sorting of a certain type of object or artifact found in the region.

Here we have, at least in its barebones formulation, a much better paradigm for syncretism than either the art of the Gandhara or the various pieces taken from Indonesian sites that are frequently lumped together under one term. The *tankas* typically exhibit just enough variation, as has been stated, to allow an individual from the region, steeped in the local cultures, to tell the origins, but also typically display enough overlap that one is in no doubt that one is looking at the type of object usually termed a “*tanka*.”

Instead of the Buddhist theme grafted onto a Greco-Roman torso mentioned by Rowland in his characterization of the Gandhara, there is a noticeable interweaving of themes, with only minor variations.<sup>10</sup> As we have argued here, it may not be possible to find an ideal exemplar of the concept of syncretism. But what is noticeable is that the instances that fall short of being an adequate instantiation of the concept are many in number, and not at all difficult to find. It remains to be seen how we can flesh out the notion of syncretism or fusion in such a way that we can gain some insight into its application.

### IV

Part of the difficulty with the concept as it is standardly adduced may have to do with its use almost solely, in art historical contexts, in terms of style. But syncretism is a much broader notion than that—it is frequently used in religious studies, for example, to speak of such fusions as that of Christianity with the traditional West African worldviews, resulting in *santería* or *voudun*. These paradigms may be very helpful: what is noteworthy about them is that which we have found most clarifying in the art historical usages: syncretism works as a notion when there is enough meshing of conceptual or visual apparatuses that a sort of seamlessness is evoked, at least some of the time, but where there are sufficient differences—or sufficient lines of disjointure—that some conceptual differences can be made out.

Recent work by Cliff McMahon, on the traditional art of China, is helpful in the sense that the bare notion of syncretism employed in his analysis (and he does not actually use that term) has more to do with worldview than with style. In a piece titled “The Sign System in Chinese Landscape Paintings,” he tries to contrast a Buddhist view of the void with a Taoist view of the absolute, and at a later point a Taoist take with a Confucian view.<sup>11</sup> Of a landscape painting featuring mountains, McMahon writes:

Thus the principle of cosmic brotherhood stands at the center of Chinese painting, and leaps out at the viewer when we see a dominant mountain flanked by lesser brother and sister mountains. The suggestion of brotherhood is Taoist, while the sense of hierarchy in proper relationships is Confucian. There has never been any serious incompatibility between Taoism and Confucianism, though there have been tensions. The Tao principle operating in the *Li* forms establishes proper behavior in all things.<sup>12</sup>

Here, the more compatible Taoist and Confucian views might be said to constitute a syncretism, at least insofar as the system of signs operative in this particular painting is concerned. They are distinguishable enough that “there have been tensions,” yet not so separate—as certain forms of Buddhism and Taoism are, on McMahon’s analysis—that we experience difficulty in imagining a fusion or syncretism between them. They can be picked out, as worldview thematizations, but we do not sense that one is a simple and awkward overlay of the other. This brief analysis by McMahon may offer important clues to a valuable clarification of the concept of syncretism: its best paradigms may not be differing “styles” in the visual arts, but differing conceptual schemes, insofar as they manifest themselves, at least occasionally, in stylistic differences. Now perhaps we can account for some of the paradoxical air engendered by the use of the term “syncretism” and its cognates.

## V

I have argued throughout this paper that the notion of syncretism is a recondite one, and that at least one art historical style, taken from the art of India and commonly cited in this regard (the Gandhara school) may be more of a hindrance than a help in getting clear on this notion.

In attempting to round out the concept, we have examined not only the Gandhara work—admittedly, according to critics like Rowland, a failure in many respects where syncretism is concerned—but the art of Indonesia, taken conceptually, and the construct usually labeled in the art historical world “Tibetan *tanka*.” If syncretism is a concept that might be at home in the scheme of the golden mean, part of our argument here has been that Gandhara work is too much of an obvious grafting to constitute much of a genuine fusion, and much Indonesian work is virtually indistinguishable from a great deal of the work to be found in India itself. The *tanka*, as an exemplar, seemed closer to what might be required, since commentators such as Muller-Ebeling and Ratsch specifically point out its various ethnic characteristics, while admitting that *tankas* taken as a whole constitute an admissible class.

Finally, we finished our analysis with an allusion to syncretism of conceptual style or worldview, rather than of simple visual style. McMahon’s analysis of signs in Chinese landscape painting provided us with a view of syncretism that, on some level, approximated that exemplified by the *tanka*, while perhaps being more explanatory. The relation of the mountains to each other, as articulated by McMahon, allows for a signification with each mountain, and their grouping as a whole. This gives new strength to the notion of syncretism, and makes it easier for us to deal with it as a concept adequate for art historical purposes.

Syncretism makes its appearance on a regular basis in aesthetic analysis. We would do the notion a disservice if we do not attempt to unpack it and, in a syncretistic spirit, arrive at some final culminating overview.

### Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> The long-standing prominent work on the subject is Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, Inc., 1967.

<sup>2</sup> Rowland, *op. cit.*, p. 76

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>6</sup> David Goldblatt, “The Frequency of Architectural Acts: Diversity and Quantity in Architecture,” in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XLVI, No. 1, Fall 1987, pp. 61-66. This citation p. 62.

<sup>7</sup> Brochure titled “The Sculpture of Indonesia,” National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., August 1990.

<sup>8</sup> Claudia Muller-Ebeling and Christian Ratsch address this question in their work *Shamanism and Tantra in the Himalayas*, Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2002. Specifically,

to try to dispel the notion that all that is labeled “Tibetan” actually has its origins in Tibet, they say: “[There was] a long tradition of exchanges and mutual inspiration between Tibet and Nepal. Artists from the Kathmandu Valley were brought to Tibetan monasteries in order to paint *thangkas* for them on commission. They often remained there for years....” (p. 78)

<sup>9</sup> The authors go into detail with respect to the variations on pp. 84-85, *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> That the origins of the *tankas* is no small matter is attested to by the very sort of labeling typical of Western art houses and museums to which the authors object. A recent exhibit of similar pieces in New York was titled, by the curators, “Sacred Visions: Early Paintings from Central Tibet.” (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1998; catalog by Harry Abrams, New York, 1998.)

<sup>11</sup> Cliff G. McMahon, “The Sign System in Chinese Landscape Paintings,” in *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 37, No. 1, Spring 2003, pp. 64-76. The contrast is developed most fully on p. 69.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*

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# Oriya Culture: Legitimacy and Identity

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In 1941 Surendranath Dasgupta, an eminent Indian Philosopher, made some valuable observations on the related issues of culture, civilization and nationalism that have been reasonably controversial in current intellectual debates. Dasgupta wrote:

Civilization in the main has been the product of our efforts for self-protection. Within a particular society and nation it has resulted in the exercise of control in the interests of mutual protection and mutual satisfaction. Legal, political and educational institutions train up the people of a community to desist from the transgression of mutual rights and privileges and punish those who commit any actual violence. But the progress of civilization has not yet been able to produce any institutions which are effective in controlling the relations between two or more different nations. In unfortunate countries where there are diverse religious sects which are more or less equal in strength, or in countries where there are different parties contending for supremacy in different ways we have a similar difficulty in evolving institutions which could work for mutual benefits. The evolution of civilization of a scientific type, such as we now find in Europe, has contributed immensely to the welfare and well-being not only of the people of Europe but of the whole world. The power of science, the might of accumulated wealth, and the energy of virile nations are being made subservient to motives of fear, greed and ambition. If our civilization is baffling us, may we seek our salvation in any other quarter? (1941/1981:352)

Studying the international situations during the world wars, Dasgupta observed, “Nationalism in modern times is in a large measure economic in its concept. The securing of economic advantage for a special country, the maintenance and furtherance of its economic interests are probably the strongest argument in favour of nationalism.”

On the other hand, Dasgupta observes, culture, as derived from the Latin *cultura* meaning cultivation, implies a special refinement or psychic improvement, a spiritual grasping that “represents not only the intellectual side of civilization but the



entire spiritual life involving the superior sense of value as manifested in morals, religion and art and the diverse forms of social and other institutions and forms and ways of life.” Although in ancient times cultures of different races, countries and nations, often opposed to one another, were associated with religion, morality, and the arts, in modern times culture is being impregnated by materialist economic tendencies, and the spirit of nationalism determined by this strong selfish materialism leads to political domination as manifest in colonialism and power conflict of the world wars. The invasion of this materialist nationalism into culture destroys the very core of the culture, i.e., the entire spiritual asset of the nation concerned: (350-373)

Dasgupta’s observations are still accurate, even in the current researches that focus on the interrelationship of several key concepts such as nation, state, proto-nation, nation state, region and empire in constitution and determination of social relationship among the diverse communities of human beings. No human being is identified as simply a living being as the very epithet “human” implies the properties interpreted in terms of the key concepts mentioned above. What grouped people in the pre-historical period is most appropriately to their nativity or birth (derived from the Latin *natus*) that gave rise to the concept of race or *ethnos*, reminescent in the voice of Pharaoh Ka-mose, “my wish is to save Egypt and to smite the Asiatics” (Grosby,2)—a feeling that distinguished the Sumerian (brothers of the sons of Sumer) in the area of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (around 2500 B.C.) from the “foreigners” (non-Sumerian).

Kinship and territory then became the two major criteria of grouping the human beings into, what might be called in the current idiom, a “nation,” and the tendency to protect this nation against the foreigners is designated by the current term “nationalism” which is vitiated by, as Dasgupta rightly observes, a materialist political economy applied in usurping other nations exercising whatever mechanism possible even at the cost of violating all the criteria of humanity. This inhuman grouping of humanity, in fact, gave rise to a paradoxical materialist view of culture that advocates an anti-materialist appropriation of human existence in the guise of Marxist political economy.

The next criterion of the natal brotherhood became language and script as in the case of the Israelites and Chinese: “These are the sons of Shem”, records *Genesis* 10.31-32, “according to their clans and languages, in their lands according to their nations (*goyim*). These are the clans of the sons of Noah according to their lineage in their nations (*goyim*)”. So also records Herodotus for grouping the Greeks, (*Hellenics*) “Then there is our common Greekness: we are one in blood and one in language; those shrines of the gods belong to us (both the Spartans and the Athenians) all in common, and the sacrifices in common, and there are our habits, bred of a common upbringing.” (Grosby, 2) Religion and habits (customs, manners) are now added as criteria for grouping the humans. For Plato and Aristotle, language has been the major criterion for distinguishing the Greeks from the peoples of Asia Minor whom they call “barbarian” because they speak a language which is incomprehensible to the Greeks. The Greek word *barbaros* is an onomatopoeia coined after the sounds “bar-bar” the peoples of Asia Minor utter which the Greeks failed to comprehend. Thus the contemptive connotation of this word is only due to its linguistic incomprehensibility. As Plato

records in the *Republic*, the linguistic difference has been the major cause in grouping the Greeks distinguished from the “others”—barbarians, foreign, alien, enemies against whom they must assert themselves.(Grosby, 3)

Similarly, Patañjali, while commenting on Pāṇini’s aphorisms on the Sanskrit grammar asserts that the Brahmanas of *Āryadeva* are distinguished as civilized/ disciplined (*śiṣṭa*) because they speak Sanskrit, (the language of the bred) and are thus distinguished sharply from those who speak other languages such as Pāli used in the sayings of the Buddha whom the Brahmanas despised for his anti-Vedic revolution. (Patañjali does not use the word *Saṁskṛta*. He divides the language of the Āryans into two classes: *Vaidika* and *laukika*, the latter being referred to as *Saṁskṛta*—*Sam+ṛta* meaning “refined”.) Patañjali further following the Vedic authority, observes that there are four categories of language that these Brahmanas know (and use) whereas the common man speak only the fourth category, i.e., *Vaikhari*, the category that Bhartṛhari (5<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) elaborated later. Patañjali, however, comments that the language spoken by the people of lands such as Kamboja, Saurāṣṭra and Middle East (*Prācya-madhyā*) are not accepted as standard by the Āryans, and obviously, Pāṇini formulates the rules of the language used by the Āryans only. (*MBh.* 1.1-4 and 5) Language, thus, has been a primary criterion for the identity of a group of people.

Modern linguists also acknowledge the major role of language in identifying a particular group of people such as English, German and French, and the degree of expressivity of a language is further a major criterion of the cultural status of the people who use it. Thus the French expression “*langue de culture*” (“*language of culture*”) is employed by the French speaking scholars for distinguishing what are held to be culturally more advanced from culturally less advanced languages, language rating thereby the cultural status of the users of that language. (Lyons, 1981: Chap.10) But this French notion of *langue de culture* was abandoned by the German thinkers like Johann Herder and Humboldt. Nevertheless, modern linguists recommend both the biological and cultural aspects of language arguing for a universal substructure in grammar, vocabulary and phonology as also a cultural superstructure that identifies a particular language. Patañjali exhibits his great insight in distinguishing the language of the Āryans that Pāṇini and he himself took up for analysis while distinguishing it from the languages of other lands and territories. Both of them anticipate modern linguistics in this regard.

It appears from Patañjali that a people’s identity is determined not so much by the territory as by the language it uses. In course of political expansion and imposition of administrative authority this language also exercises its domination; and what else is expanded along with this territory is the religious practices accompanied by the social manners, customs, habits and even superstitions of the people who use the language concerned. Plato, Herodotus and Patañjali all are unanimous in accepting this historical truth. Patañjali even does not hesitate to bring in the relevance of religious customs to the analysis of linguistic principles. Very significantly he observes that although language is a matter of use it needs a grammatical discipline for its codification so that the users must follow this system. Otherwise, he exemplifies, a man may speak anything

he wishes to speak a practice similar to a hungry man's eating a dog's flesh or a lusty man's cohibition with any partner for satisfying sexual appetite. *Dharma* and *âcâra* stand models for a system of language. (*MBh.* I-1)

## II

But Dasgupta's observations in distinguishing between culture and civilization have been disregarded in the Freudian discourse that considers both in terms of moral perspectives—learned behavioral functions of human beings, progressive developments from natural state, by means of 'repression' and 'sublimation'—*civil* and *cultura*, the roots of these words meaning to control and cultivate respectively. (Mulhern, 25-28) Both culture and civilization refer to systematic social practices in which human animals adapt their instincts for the purpose of coexistence—these practices being either persuasive or coercive in the individual and institutional levels. Thus society is an institution of which the individuals in their various groups are constituents. Social changes that constitute the course of human history both determine and are determined by the modes of correlation among these groups. One may not wholesomely agree with Karl Marx that the terms in which this correlation takes place are always material, i.e., production, distribution and exchange of commodities necessary for human survival—the economic principles that determine the political factors of human existence: "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." (Marx, 1859/1970:181) Freud's moral aspects of repression and sublimation attributable to a psychological phenomenon called 'consciousness' are reduced by Marx to material phenomenon.

Dasgupta's value-loaded notion of culture is founded, on the traditional Brahmanic ideology of the elitist world view as well as on the Victorian and modernist notions of culture reflected in both Mathew Arnold and Thomas Eliot. As an antonym of anarchy, Arnold understands culture as a perfection of discipline almost synonymous to civilization—with all its idealist references such as passion for sweetness and light, the best which has been thought and said in the world, a function of the right reason, the phenomena that are beyond the reach of common man. Similarly, the minoritarian cultural politics of Frank Leavis is also reflected in Thomas Eliot who proposes three kinds of culture—that of individuals, that of groups, and that of the whole society—one depending on the other. He *defines* culture by way of setting limitation to culture: "On the whole, it would appear to be for the best that the great majority of human beings should go on living in the place in which they are born." (52) In other words, it is for the best that the great majority should not or be taught to aspire to anything more than their familiar lot—clearly a capitalist bourgeois notion of culture that is denied to the common man. Culture as 'a whole way of life' is, for Eliot, something that cannot be placed by man's consciousness, except by a divine being (say God), and in its unconscious level, culture is an archetypal phenomenon unreachable for any conscious efforts. Thus culture and common man are on opposite poles.

But Eliot's notion of 'the whole way of life' is viewed in a radically different

perspective by Raymond Williams erasing the Eliotian 'limits' from the definition of culture. From its unconscious state of existence culture was transported to the state of a social consciousness that characterizes the very group of people concerned. Thus, like language (Saussurean *parole*) culture is always a particular social practice in a particular historical context. There is no universal culture with value-loaded idealist image that can be placed not by a man, but by a divine being. According to Williams, 'culture is ordinary' that covers the entire area of social practice of a particular people.

The social practice(s) of a people, that is called 'culture' includes language, world views, customs and manners, food habits, costume, religious beliefs and rituals, dance, music and related performances on festive occasions, arts and crafts. In identifying a culture, language is a major social fact that endows human behaviour, in a particular context, with meaning. Language is, in other words, the meaning-model of human behaviour. Thus in identifying a culture, among other factors such as territory and political unity, language plays the major role although, sometimes, religion dominates the linguistic factor as in the case of Islamic culture. Similarly, Chinese culture is divided into two religious camps—Buddhist and non-Buddhist irrespective of a common language it uses. Political unity sometimes tolerates differences in language in a single territory as in the case of the previous USSR that covered a vast area in terms of a single political ideology. But, as the history proves, this unity does not last long. However, language and religion have been the principal instruments in the emergence and identity of a culture. When territorial modification takes place by political factors, use of language is immediately affected, as in the case of people of Midnapore after its merger into the modern Bengal. In the event of the political unity of the Indian subcontinent under the rubric of a 'nation', while allowing the linguistic freedom of the regional states, a unifying language was in urgent need. Nevertheless, in the post-colonial era, identity of a national Indian culture is conceived not in terms of this single unifying language, but in terms of different languages used by the people of different regional territories that are either politically determined or are the determinants of the political territories. Therefore, within the single Indian (political) territory (nation) we can legitimately identify the regional (state) cultures based on language as a major factor, other social factors such as religion, arts and crafts remaining pan-Indian to a great extent. The concept of the Indian 'nationality', an integrated subcontinental territory, irrespective of differences in language and religion, is of the colonial origin: "The very completeness of Britain's empire helped give rise to national feeling. All of India was now linked by a common administration. This made it easier for people to conceive of the country as a nation. English education gave in different provinces a common medium of communication and a shared set of ideas. Among these was nationalism—a concept new to India, and even in Europe relatively of recent origin." (Heehs: 46)

Tagore's definition of nationalism anticipates this view: "what is the Nation? It is the aspect of a whole people as an organized power (p. 66)... the Nation which is the organized self-interest of a whole people, when it is least human and least spiritual. One intimate experience of the Nation is with the British Nation... we have to reorganise that the history of India does not belong to one particular race but to a process of creation to which various races of the world contributed—the Dravidians and the Aryans, the

ancient Greeks and the Persians, the Mohammedans of the West and those of central Asia... Therefore what I say about the Nation has more to do with the history of Man, than specially with that of India” (pp.8-9). Tagore’s concept of the “whole people” that constitute the Nation is not merely territorial and ethnic. It is an organic unification of several social practices such as language, religion and manners, a unification which is perhaps most spectacular in case of the Indian subcontinent that emerged politically and economically during the British rule. Tagore further adds: “A nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose. It is an end in itself. It is a spontaneous self-expression of a man as a social being. It is a natural regulation of human relationships, so that man can develop ideals of life in cooperation with one another. It has also a political side, but this is only for a special purpose. It is for self-preservation. It is merely the side of power, not of human ideals.” (p. 5)

Thus the Nation in its social perspective is a healthy concept with its humanist or romantic connotation whereas it is a disease in its political context—a threat for the whole humanity in its connotation of Nationalism as exemplified by the Nazi consciousness and more evident in the British colonial slogan—“Rule Britannia Rule the Waves.” Therefore Tagore declares, “Nationalism is a great menace.”

But paradoxically, the concept of Nationalism precedes the concept of Nation (Hobsbawm, 8-11) which is not a primary or an unchanging social unity. “It belongs exclusively to a particular, and historically recent, period. It is a social entity only insofar as it relates to certain kind of modern territorial state, nation-state, and it is pointless to discuss nation and nationality except insofar as both relate to it.”

Viewed in this light, it is both anachronic and illegitimate to think of an Oriya nationalist culture both in its medieval and modern colonial contexts. (Contra Nivedita Mohanty, *Oriya Nationalism: Quest for a United Orissa 1866-1956*, Cuttack: Prafulla, 2005.)

### III

If ‘nation’ is understood in its Latin origin *natus* (birth), then the issue of Indian ‘nation’ would be only a fiction in so far as for over centuries India has been a meeting place of several ethnic origins struggling for their people’s existence by way of political and cultural dominations all their perspectives in historical realities testifying to the truth of this statement. The age-old political history of India is, therefore, a history of the rival administrative groups struggling against each other for foundation of their sovereign states in different regions. Under such circumstances, the emergence of the state of Orissa (Odiûâ) cannot be traced beyond the 15<sup>th</sup> c. A.D., the rise of Kapilendradeva who claimed to be a descendant of the great Sun Dynasty of the mythical Raghus of the *Râmâyana*. The truth appears to be the fact that Kapila was born to a farmer’s family of Odra tribe (*Oda casâ*) and worked on the Ganga army eventually usurping the throne in 1435 A.D. (Panigrahi: 190 ff.) Claiming himself to be a descendant of the Sun Dynasty is clearly setting himself against the Kesari rulers who claimed themselves to be descendants of the Moon (mythical Sornavṛṇasî) Dynasty of the

*Mahâbhârata*— implying thereby that he was much more powerful than all his predecessors.

Ancient texts ranging from the *Mahâbhârata* (2<sup>nd</sup> c. B.C.) to the *Matsya*, *Vâyu* and *Bhâgavata Purâṇas* composed during the Gupta period (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) mention several states in the eastern coastal zone such as Kalinga, Odra, Utkala and (southern) Kośala (Banerji, 37 ff.) although their topological references are not unanimous. *Manusâhîhitâ* that represents the Brahmanical ideology par excellence (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD) counts Odra as associated with the non-Arya races such as Draviḍa, Yavana, Ēaka and Pauṇḍraka, obviously with a pejorative attitude. Yuan Chwang’s placing of Odra, Kaṅgoda and Kalinga covering the coastal areas of the modern Midnapore–Cuttack, Puri–Ganjam and the Southern Ganjam–Northern Andhra respectively is rather more historical than the mythological sources, particularly his mention of behavioural and linguistic differences appears more significant.

But prior to the arrival of Yuwan Chwang, historians have recently pointed out (Samuel, 47), during the second phase of urbanization, in the post-Harappan period, around 550 B.C. there were settlements in the central Gangetic plain of the northern India that comprised sixteen mahajanapadas (city states) such as Kasi, Kosambi, Avanti, Saketa, Kośala, Magadha, Matsya, Aṅga, Vṛṇsa, Chedi along with smaller republics (*gana*) such as Vṛji, Papa and Kapilavastu. Somewhat later by a century, settlements also grew up at the deltas of the Ganges, Mahanadi, Kṛṣṇa and Kaveri. By the time Asoka invaded Kalinga and took over the Cholas and Andhras, the Mahanadi delta was under the state of Kalinga, rich for its agriculture and trading. Two ports were renowned for setting sails abroad Chelitola (mouth of Chitrotapala/ Mahanadi, the name occurring in Yuwan Chwang) and Palura (on the southern end of Chilika lake, now in Ganjam district). Asoka’s Buddhist missionaries sailed for the ‘Land of Gold’ (Suvarṇadvîpa/ Sumatra) from these two ports of Kalinga, Chelitola being then a very thickly populated port-township. This township might have been under the Odra region during the visit of Yuwan Chwang. (May: 11).

Yayâti’s unification of Kośala with Odra and Kalinga is an important political event during the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> c. A.D but it contributes little to the emergence of a *jâti* (a category by birth—from the Sanskrit root *jan*) that can be culturally identified as Oḍia. Similarly, the Gaṅgas also contributed little. As it appears, Kalinga was rather culturally dominant with its characteristic identity as a land of courageous people. Viṁvanâtha Kavirâja the most influential Sanskrit poetician of the later Gaṅga Period (14<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) cites a popular Sanskrit use *Kaliga Sâhasika* that refers to the courageous people of the land of Kalinga who fought against the conquest of Aśoka during the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. (*SD*, II. 5 glass) Another influential author of the same period, Ūṛidharasvāmî, makes nowhere any reference to the Oḍiâs as a cultural category in his commentaries on the major Bhâgavata texts. If such are the facts by the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> c. AD, then the efforts made by historians (Behera, 7ff.) in exploring an Oḍiâ *jâti* in Pliny’s *Natural History* or in the records left by the Islamic travelers are only futile. Identifying the Oḍiâ people with a rice-eating category (*orua* derived from Pliny’s *Oretes*, meaning unboiled rice) makes no reference to any distinct cultural category with characteristic social

practices. For that matter, Andhras and Gaudas are also rice-eating people. Moreover, both the Gaudas and Odiās do not eat *oruā* rice, preferring commonly boiled (*usunā/siddha*) rice whereas *Oruā* is favoured by the Andhras (Kaliṅga). Mention of a dance type called “Odra-Māgadhi in Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra* does ‘not refer to any distinct cultural practice, not withstanding the probability that this particular dance type was popular in Odra and Magadha. The point is that without any linguistic practice, mere territorial or even the ethnic factors cannot determine a cultural identity. It is absolutely evident that till the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> c. A.D. Sanskrit was the language of the elite and of the court, notwithstanding the fact that the common people of Odra and Kaṇḍoda were using the Māgadhi form of Prākṛta before the Yayāti I and II who mingled the Bhojpuri form of Prākṛta with Māgadhi and thus caused the origin of a language that might be called proto-Oriya (Panigrahi, 284 ff.) with its considerable development during the last phase of the Ganga Dynasty.

Viūvanātha claims to be a master of eighteen languages and has composed a multilingual poem titled *Pratīstirātāvalī* (technically called a *Karambhaka* a specific poetic genre in Sanskrit) where he has used sixteen languages. But in the absence of this text, it is not possible to trace the varieties of language he has used. Assuming the use of several forms of Prākṛita and Apabhraṃśa, apart from Sanskrit, one might expect that he has also used the regional language(s) spoken by common people. That he was acquainted with the spoken language of his region is clear from his discussion of the poetic blemishes in *Sāhityadarpaṇa*. For example, he considers the first two letters of the Sanskrit word *pelava* (chap. 7), i.e., *pela* as vulgar (*ailīla*). In Sanskrit *pela* (derived from the root *pel* = to move, go) means movement, and as such cannot be vulgar. The word referring to the male genitals/testicles is certainly in its regional (*deīaja*) use. Similarly, Viūvanātha considers the use of the Sanskrit word *vāyu* (wind) as vulgar (*grāmya*: pertaining to the folk use) in the expression *prasasāra ūanaiḥ vāyu vīnāue tanvi te tadā* (The [vital=*prāna*] air passed away slowly at the time of your death). With the word *prasasāra* the word *vāyu* might refer to *apāna vāyu* (passing air through anus) instead of *prāna vāyu* (vital air). This use of *vāyu* is certainly not in the Sanskrit context, implying therefore a regional use only. But it is not at all clear what exactly is the identity of this regional language—Oḍiā, Kalingī or Utkalī. Even Vararuci, the celebrated author of *Prākṛta Prakāśa* (5<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.?), does not mention any regional language associated with Odra, although the editor of a recension of the text refers to Bharata’s mention of two tribal (*vanccara*) languages (*vibhāsā*) such as *Oḍṛī* and *Andhrī* (P.10). But the historicity of his observation is not confirmed by any authentic sources. Among the six *Vibhāsās* Bharata counts (XVII, 49) *aeakārā*, *ābhīrī*, *candālī*, *ūāvarī*, *dramilā*, *āndhrajā* and Bharata among the seven (*deśa*) *bhāsās*, he counts *māgadhi*, *ardhamāgadhi*, *bāhlikā*, *prācyā*, *āvantī ūaurasenī* and *dāksinātyā* (XCVII, 48), Vararuci counts four major *prākṛta* languages—*mahārāstrī*, *paiūāci*, *māgadhi* and *ūaura* (*sura*) *senī*. Sūryanārāyaṇa Dāśha, however, traces a form of *Kaliṅgī* Prākṛta in Khāravela’s (1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C.) inscriptions. (Dāśha, 25) But, as noted earlier, his tracing an Oḍṛa *vibhāsā* (p. 15) on the basis of Bharata’s text quoted above is unfounded.

The political unification of Oḍṛa, Kaṇḍoda and Kośala by the Somavarṇis and the subsequent unification of Kaliṅga by the Gaṅgas located their capital cities in

the Oḍṛa region—Jajipur and Cuttack respectively—encouraging thereby an agrarian economy that formulated the basic cultural motifs of the state. Land grants to Brahmins invited from the Northern India for their final settlement in this state was particularly intended for circulation of Brahmanic ideology: “They not only helped their patrons in maintaining power but also acted as foci of culture, providing a moral and ideological anchor.” (Sharma, 341) Simultaneously a feudatory system of administration also required land grants to the warrior-leaders and other categories such as Nāyakas and Sāmantas. Sharma counts several such categories as- *bhūpāla*, *bhogī*, *mahābhogī*, *vṛhadbhogī* so on and so forth (*ibid.* 334-6). As a result of this feudatory land grants, the tribal people of Oḍṛa were gradually introduced to the rising social pattern of courtly life. Therefore, a type of culture that could be legitimately identified as Oḍiā with the rise of Kapilendradeva an Oḍiā by birth speaking himself Oḍiā language, is a feudatory courtly culture founded on an agrarian economy. What is reflected by the early phase of Oḍiā literature is therefore the agrarian and courtly culture of the state.

It is true that sometimes religion dominates language in identifying a culture. But in identifying Oriya culture, linguistic factor dominates because there is no religion to be identified as Oḍiā. Efforts for exploring an Oriya religion founded on the worship of the image of Lord Jagannātha at Puri naming it alternatively as Jagannātha religion are only misleading. Exploration of a Jagannātha cult is still more misleading, because worship of Jagannātha is not a cult in itself. A worship is considered a cult only when it forms a systematic pattern with its distinct initiative process (see Eliade: 1969) e.g., aboriginal and pre-Vedic worships and rituals such as those of the village deities (*grāmadevatā*) and lake-deities. (viz., Kālījāi of Cilikā in Orissa.) Besides, the Buddhist Vajrayāna cults of Tāra, Vajravārāhī, Avalokiteśvara, the Brahmanic Pāñcarātra cults and Bhāgavata cult. (See also Dasgupta, S.B.: 1969) In cult worships specific *mantras*, *maṇḍalas* with distinct methods of worship are used. Jagannātha worship is a wing of Bhāgavata cult in its syncretic form tending to synthesize all the five branches of Brahmanic tantric tradition—Gānapatya, Saurya, Vaiṣṇava, Ūaiva and Ūākta—with even the heterodox Buddhist and aboriginal religious cults. Even if this very syncretism is identified as an independent cult, not a part of Bhāgavata cult which is purely Vaisnavite in character with particular reference to the worship of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva, there is no reason for marking it as an identity for Oriya culture on the ground that the shrine of Jagannātha is in the territory of modern Orissa—actually belonging to the territory of ancient Kaṇḍoda. In that case, the so-called Jagannātha cult must be a pan-Indian religious phenomenon far beyond the confinement of any regional culture. But, not withstanding all these possibilities, the fact remains that it is the worship of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva, the deity of Bhāgavata cult, that predominates the worship of Lord Jagannātha as evident in the existing Oriya literature and festive rituals that emerged in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Surprisingly enough, in the Sanskrit writings of the three great Vaisnava personalities of Kaliṅga-Oḍṛa state Jayadeva (12<sup>th</sup> c.), Ūṛidhara Svāmī and Visvanāthā Kavirāja (14<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.), Jagannātha is nowhere mentioned as the representative deity of this state. Viūvanātha is a devout worshipper of Lord Nārāyaṇa a Vedic deity whereas Jayadeva and Ūṛidhara are the devotees of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva—the former with his

Sahajayâna foundation and the latter with his Brahmanic/Vedic tradition (my monographs on both the authors forthcoming with Sahitya Akademi, Delhi). Popularity of this deity in Oḍiâ culture appears to be simultaneous with the rise of Kapilendradeva, although the shrine was installed much earlier during the rise of the Gaṅgas (11<sup>th</sup> c.). Keeping aside all controversies regarding the history of this shrine, one can be sure that the shrine is of the post-Alvâr period (later than the 9<sup>th</sup> c. AD) because Puri has not been counted as one of the pilgrim spots of these South Indian Vaiṣṇavas, whereas Dvârikâ, Vṛndâvana and Naimisâranya feature on the list. Avoiding, however, all controversy in this regard, one can conveniently assert that Lord Jagannâtha appears as the representative deity of an agrarian economy with its feudal socio-cultural pattern as evident from its common accessibility, association with agrarian rituals and food habits, the deity being further acknowledged as the chief *Sâmanta* of the state the rulers whereof being his subordinates—*Râutas*.

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# **The Metaphysics of the Word: A Study of Bhartṛhari's *Śabdādvaitavāda***

TANDRAPATNAIK

Since the 1950s when philosophy took a 'linguistic turn' academic philosophers of U.K and America have declared loud and clear that "metaphysics is dead". Also those of us trained in Western analytic tradition have unabashedly followed the dictum and still believe that discussing metaphysics is below our dignity. Naturally, the topic of my discussion here may seem violate the diktat. Yet I decide to write something on metaphysics as I strongly feel that it is a significant aspect of our cognitive pursuit. Along with our passion for the facts and certainty we have a passion for rationality too. In this context I am reminded of a very significant plea made by William James in support of the human need for indulging in metaphysics. He reasons out that we delve into metaphysics because of our "desire to attain a conception of the frame of things which shall be on the whole more rational than that chaotic view which every one by nature carries about with him under his hat."<sup>1</sup> Man is always in search of a better consistency and clarity in his framework of thought. Understood in this sense, metaphysics as an intellectual pursuit does not aim at solving the mysteries of the trans-empirical realities. It is another name for thought that seeks self-consistency. So metaphysics as an intellectual pursuit is not primarily an investigation into ontology, but an analysis of certain basic concepts, that is characterized by a better power to offer a consistent view of life and the universe. This consistency comes from the human propensity for rationality. However, we must remember that the postulates that a metaphysician holds close to his heart can neither be proved nor disproved. They are simply postulates; and in their manipulation of concepts sometimes philosophers rely on this or that concept heavily. They pull this or that string of the conceptual net and the net appears in this or that shape. We may label this tendency of the conceptual net and the net appears in this or that shape. Following Strawson<sup>2</sup> we may label this tendency of the metaphysicians, a form of "intellectual imperialism". Thus the philosophers have a tendency to produce strikingly different world-picture dominated by a specific concept, representing a particular attitude or interest. If the monists put stress on the concept of 'unity' then the pluralists see more rationality in the concept of 'plurality'. Accordingly, they present the rational and conceptual scheme in such a way that every thing suits the scheme of concepts. Despite such imperialism, metaphysics is not a spurious activity. It has use in any form, whether the metaphysician presents a descriptive or a revisionary form of metaphysics. I intend to discuss a metaphysical position that is dominated by

the concept of language/word. We know that in the last few decades philosophers have been obsessed with the concept of language and this obsession has almost become the (to borrow a phrase from Gilbert Ryle<sup>3</sup>) 'occupational disease' of the modern philosophers. Yet nowhere we come across a system of thought entirely structured around the concept of the Word (language). This philosophical position presented by the 5<sup>th</sup> century grammarian philosopher Bhartṛhari not only presents a strikingly distinctive picture of the word and the world, but also makes us realize the importance of the phenomenon called language. For him the human understanding of the concepts of existence, consciousness and action that determine our comprehension of the world are primarily and essentially rooted in the concept of *Śabda Brahman*. This is the non-dual and unique Reality. Therefore his metaphysical position is also known as *Śabdādvaitavāda* (Linguistic non-dualism).

In the classical Indian tradition, however, the concept of language has always played an important role in the philosophical quest. In fact the inquisitiveness about 'language' as a concept is as old as the Indian civilization itself. J.F. Stall very rightly observes, "at times almost excessive preoccupation with language on the one hand and with philosophy on the other may indeed be regarded as the characteristic of Indian civilization."<sup>4</sup> This is evident from the fact that *Rg Veda*, one of the oldest scriptures of India contains innumerable insightful remarks about the nature of *śabda* (language) and *vāk* (speech). This fascination was more articulately presented in the philosophical scriptures and texts of the subsequent period. Some modern thinkers like B.K. Matilal are of the opinion that Bhartṛhari was one of the earliest exponents of Advaitism, later on made more explicit by Śaṅkarācārya.

Before I explicate the philosophical nuances of a distinctively different genre of Advaitism advocated by Bhartṛhari I deem it necessary to say few words about this philosopher who was more misunderstood than understood in the philosophical tradition of India. He was in the true sense of the term the first philosopher of language in India, who dared to develop a metaphysics based on the famous upanishadic line—*vāk vai Brahman* (Word/the principle of speech is verily the Brahman).<sup>5</sup> Though his system of philosophy very prominently figures in the *Sarva darśanasamgraha* of Madhavācārya, yet Bhartṛhari rarely finds a mention in the standard textbooks on Indian philosophy. The reason for such omission is very obvious. Bhartṛhari was no part of the tradition of the *dārśanikas* or the accredited systems of philosophy, like, Śāṅkhya, Nyāya, etc. As far as his scholastic affiliation was concerned, Bhartṛhari belonged to the school of *Vaiyākaraṇikas* established by such great grammarians as Pāṇini and Patañjali. So the traditional philosophers never accorded him the status of a philosopher. Yet his work *Vākyapadīya* deals more with the philosophy of language than with the axioms of grammar. Therefore, it is no surprise that no great philosopher of India could avoid discussing the concepts and issues raised by him regarding the nature of *śabda* including Śaṅkara, Dīnāga and Jayanta Bhaṭṭa. This is one of the reasons why his fellow grammarians like Utpalācārya criticized him for transgressing the limits of grammar and dabbling in metaphysics. Such was the plight of a great thinker that he was disowned by the Grammarians as a metaphysician and was dismissed by them as a mere Grammarian. Fortunately, the interest in Bhartṛhari resurrected in the last two decades with the

obsession of the Western philosophers in the philosophy of language. With this brief introduction about Bhartṛhari I shall like to go straight in to his theory of non-dualism with special reference to his conception of the world and the word relationship.

Let me now try to explicate in brief Bhartṛhari's metaphysics centered on the concept of *śabdatattva*. I intend to undertake this job with the help of a seminal verse that occurs in the opening stanza of the first canto (also significantly known as *Brahma Kāṇḍa*) of his magnum opus—*Vākyapadīya*. He declares:

The Brahman is without beginning and end, whose essence is the Word (also translated as Word-essence, *Eternal verbum*) who is the cause of the manifested phonemes (speech), who appears as the objects, from whom the activities of the world proceed.

Anybody acquainted with the Upanisadic and Advaitin tradition may not feel much uncomfortable with the first half of this verse. *Brahman* in such traditions is presented as without change and hence without beginning and end. But ambiguity seems to creep in when one comes across the line "the word appears as objects and from which the activities of the world proceeds". This line at first glance seems mystical and also very uncritical. Yet this second half of the verse is the most crucial for understanding the basic philosophical position of Bhartṛhari. So I shall mostly concentrate on the analysis of this portion of the hymn, since the focus of my paper is to explore the relation between the word and the world. I feel that the clue to the understanding the above-mentioned line rests on our grasping of the word *śabda-tattva* as *Brahman*.

Very broadly understood *śabda* means sound. If we go for a stricter interpretation then *śabda* should mean "written or uttered string of sounds having a syntax and also meaning". This is the sense in which the term has been used in case of *śabda pramāṇa* by most of the philosophical systems in India. But for Bhartṛhari the term *śabda* can have a still more deep implication. It is the name of a complex phenomenon implying an activity as well as a principle. As an activity it is something in which all human beings are engaged. This activity is guided by particularized speech-pattern having syntax, meaning and expressing the intention of the speaker. The Sanskrit term that Bhartṛhari uses for this activity is *śabdāna vyāpāra*. Following Matilal we may translate it as "languageing". Again *śabda* may stand for a principle. This is the unitary and potential ground of all our conscious activities, including thought, conceptualization and our awareness of the phenomenal world. This principle itself is *śabda tattva* that is identified with the *Brahman*, the highest Reality. We know that in our Upanisadic tradition the highest Reality is called *Brahman*. Etymologically, the term *Brahman* is derived from the root *vrh* that means, 'to grow, to expand, to become great'. In its extended sense therefore *Brahman* means 'an all pervading principle'. For Bhartṛhari *śabda tattva* (the Word Principle) is *Brahman* as this principle pervades our thought, cognition, awareness and consciousness of the phenomenal world.

So far there seems to be no ambiguities in Bhartṛhari's position. But as I have stated, the problem starts with the second part of the stanza. Even if we take it for granted that *śabdatattva Brahman* is the highest Reality, does it not look incongruous

to claim that *śabdatattva* 'appears as objects and all the phenomenal activities proceed from this'. Unless Bhartṛhari convincingly explains a logical and conceptual connection between the empirical world and the Reality, his metaphysical system is likely to collapse. So let us explore and examine Bhartṛhari's own justifications for his claim.

We all know that the world of objects does not have anything common with the world of words. Objects are believed to be out there and we apply words to refer to them. But in his explanatory note on the verse mentioned above, Bhartṛhari provides an altogether different interpretation of 'objects'. He says objects are *śabdopagrāhi*. In other words, objects are word-determined. Be it perception, inference or any other method, whenever we cognise objects we do so in terms of names. On the basis of names we identify objects and distinguish one class of objects from another. If objects are not nameable they are not identifiable, hence not cognizable. Our cognition on the other hand is *śabdopagrāhya*, i.e., word-impregnated or intertwined with words. Our consciousness and cognition have a natural potency to act through words. Thus both cognition and objects, being word-generated, are in principle, dependent on the *śabda tattva*.

Regarding this unusual theory about the word-world relationship Bhartṛhari offers further justifications. He argues that the objects are identified as distinct objects once they are subsumed under a word or a name. Otherwise, the world of objects is unidentifiable and indistinguishable 'something'. In other words, distinction is made between one object and another on the basis of words or names assigned to them. This theory of Bhartṛhari is in direct contrast to the Nyāya view about the cognition of objects. Gotama in his *Nyāyasūtra* (I. I. 4.) states non-verbalisability (*avyapadeśya*) as one of the characteristics of our cognition of objects. Elaborating on this point Vātsyāyana adds that our perception need not be always associated with verbalization, and there can always be non-linguistic cognition, i.e., (*nirvikalpa pratyakṣa*). So verbalization is not a condition of our cognition of the objects and the world. In support of his argument he cites the examples of a mute's or a child's perception. Bhartṛhari had already anticipated this objection. He says that even a mute or a child's cognition is not without the element of the potency for verbalization. He clarifies that there can be two types of words, articulate words that are speakable, and non-articulate words that are unspeakable.<sup>6</sup> Non-articulate words refer to the linguistic potency of a child, for their actions are prompted by language.<sup>7</sup> In other words, a child may not be in a position to verbalise but that does not imply the absence linguistic potency in them. In short, 'verbalisation' and 'verbalisability' are not identical concepts. Our perceptual cognition need not be always articulated in verbal form. But that does not preclude the possibility of the potency for linguistic expressibility. In case of a mute the element of speech is not absolutely absent. Bhartṛhari specifies "speech inheres in all cases of awareness just as illumination does in fire and consciousness in the mind. The subtle nature of *vāc* (speech) penetrates and permeates even such states as lack of ostensive mental activity..."<sup>8</sup> Even the bare awareness of objects (*nirvikalpa pratyakṣa*) is not possible without their being potent with cognitive discrimination (*pratyavamarśa*).<sup>9</sup> When we fail to subsume the cognition of an object under a name, we understand it with the help of the words 'this' or 'that'. Therefore, without cognitive discrimination there is no

object. Such discrimination is possible through conceptualization; and conceptualization is penetrated (*anuviddha*) by words.<sup>10</sup> Nyāya and Bhartṛhari differ widely because they take two distinct metaphysical positions. Nyāya metaphysics being realistic and pluralistic accord independence to the phenomenal world independent of mind. Bhartṛhari on the other hand, is an idealist and monist. For him, the phenomenal world is known because the mind is conscious of it, and consciousness is nothing but word-potent.

The second argument that Bhartṛhari advances in support of his thesis comes from the logic of causality, (especially, *satkāryavāda*) prevalent in the ancient Indian tradition. Such a theory of causality takes it for granted that the properties of cause continue in the effects or in the manifestations. Therefore, on the basis of observation of the nature of effects we can infer the cause. For example, curd as the effect of milk retains some of the qualities of milk. On the basis of these qualities one can infer that milk is the cause of the curd, not water. Similarly, on the basis of observation of the word-loaded nature of the phenomenal world we can infer that the cause of the world is the Word. On this basis Bhartṛhari declares:

It is the word, which sees the object, it is the word, which speaks, it is the word, which reveals the object, which was *lying hidden*, and it is on the word that the multiple world rests.<sup>11</sup>

In the above passage the objects are said to be 'lying hidden', because, according to him, the objects may exist *ad libitum*, but their true nature is not known unless and until they are subsumed under some names. This is evident from the following argument of Bhartṛhari:

Even that exists is as good as non-existent as long as it does not come within the range of verbal usage. Even totally non-existent things like hare's horn or something which appears and disappears in the sky like celestial town (*gandharva nagara*) when brought in to mind by word figures like something endowed with primary Reality, in various usages.<sup>12</sup>

This passage clarifies, to a large extent, Bhartṛhari's position on World-Word relationship. The function of the word is to 'mean'; but to mean is not to refer to an existent object. It is not a relation that can be stated in 'Fido'-Fido mould, i.e., here is the word Fido, and there is the dog Fido. In Bhartṛhari's metaphysical scheme there is no duality between the level of facts and the level of language. These two levels are non-differentiable as objects are only analyzable through language. The world of objects and the world of words cannot be cognized independent of one another. But thereby, Bhartṛhari is not presenting a form of nominalism. The world for him is not a concatenation of names. The world exists but it is never cognizable as such but always, through the 'cloak' of words. In other words, he steers clear of referential theory of meaning favoured by the Nyāya school of philosophy. He is not willing to accept the dictum that language pictures the reality. Bhartṛhari, of course has some cogent arguments in support of his thesis. He points out:



It is extremely difficult to establish by reasoning the nature of objects, because their properties differ according to differences in circumstances, place and time.<sup>13</sup>

So what we usually call as the ‘world’ or a ‘fact’ has a metaphorical existence (*upacāra sattā*). If it can ever be known it is only through the attributes superimposed on it. And such attributes are due to our conceptualization made possible through the power of language. This position of Bhartṛhari is nothing unusual. We may note that the famous Western philosopher Kant places a similar view. For him too the world as such is unknown and unknowable. Whatever we know about the experienceable world is arranged and systemized by the categories of thought/understanding. But Bhartṛhari being a linguistic non-dualist would say that even the categories of thought are word-determined. That is the exact reason why he uses the word *vivartate* (appears), i.e., *vivartate arthabhāvena*, in the second line of the verse quoted in the beginning of this paper. The objects are not the real transformation of the Word-principle but apparent transformation.

But explaining the nature of the world in terms of the word may not appear sufficient for us to understand the logical cogency of his non-dualistic philosophy. We may agree with him that without the word there is no thought, no awareness, no cognition and no knowledge of the existence of the phenomenal world as such. But is it not a fact that our thoughts and words could be episodic? They can be many. To answer this pertinent question we have to delve a bit on his conception of language itself. Bhartṛhari makes a clear-cut distinction between the three levels of understanding the concept of *śabda*. *Śabda* could be seen as a principle (*śabda tattva*), it too could be explored in the level of language-in-use which he calls as *loka vyavahāra*, and finally *śabda* could also be an object of analytical and grammatical study (*śāstra vyavahāra*). Thus as a principle *śabda* is one and unique. But when manifested as expressed speech or language it has multiple forms. It is the level of the act. At the level of act, language functions as a communicative tool. It is a vehicle of the communication of meaning. But the meaning that is expressed by particular sentences or words cannot be said to present the meaning as a whole. The particularized expression of a ‘sense’ or a ‘meaning’ through a sentence or a word can at best give us a ‘piece’ or a ‘bit’ of the *linguistic-whole*. When we use language for communication we extract a ‘part’ from this whole on the basis of what we intend to express. This is done by the method of what Bhartṛhari calls as *apoddhāra*, i.e., “the process of constant and progressive extraction, comparison and abstraction.” The meaning is attached to this abstracted bits from the *linguistic-whole* (or *meaning-whole*) by abstracting letters, from words, words from sentences, sentences from discourse, discourse from the larger discourses till we refer to the ultimate point of our *linguistic potency* (that is sometimes also variously called as the Real-word, linguistic whole or the meaning-whole). These words may not properly connote what Bhartṛhari actually designates as *sphoṭa*. It is very difficult to translate the term because no such translation can be adequate enough to focus on the real implication of the word *sphoṭa*. For Bhartṛhari *sphoṭa* is the operative ground of our linguistic communication. This concept is a pivotal point of his analysis of what do we do with the words. We know

that language has multiple nuances and we use it in unlimited number of ways to express our thought. Not only the speaker but the hearer too has the capability to understand and interpret them in similar fashion. This is possible because all language-using beings have the unitary linguistic potency. This is the non-differentiated ground of words, meaning and the object-meant. So each episodic expression is nothing but only a part of the expressible meaning-whole or *sphoṭa*. Similarly, in the level of the object-meant we employ extracted bits of meaning to refer to the ‘bits’ of phenomenal world. The world of objects as such is not knowable. We know only a part of it as presented by a word or a sentence. Whatever we know of objects is limited by concepts—the linguistic constructs (*vikalpa*). The concepts involve the process of selection and elimination. For example, the word *ghaṭa* (pot) as a concept may signify the universal of *ghaṭatva* (potness). But the particular of the pot referred to can be described and meant in innumerable ways. We can refer to pot’s colour by saying ‘the pot is red’, if we want to refer to its shape we can as well say, ‘the pot is round’, and so on. Thus the whole of the object meant can never be grasped by language. The same object can be meant differently with reference to different words that express it differently. In each case we present a limited and selected aspect of it. Thus the ‘whole of the meaning-expressed’ and the ‘whole of the object-meant’ are non-graspable by the ‘bits’ of linguistic units. Both these two dimensions of our act of languageing refer to a point of unity. And Bhartṛhari would say that this unitary whole is nothing but the meaning-whole or what B.K. Matilal translates as the non-differentiated *language-principle*.<sup>14</sup> This is shared by both, the speaker as well as the hearer so that human beings can communicate what they are capable of thinking and speaking meaningfully. This potency is one and non-differentiated but becomes differentiated when it is manifested by particularized expressions of thought and intention.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, so far as Bhartṛhari’s philosophy is concerned, there is no real gap between thought, world and language. They all are penetrated by the Word-principle. As a self-proclaimed philosopher of language (*śabdapramāṇa*) this is the only consistent way to explain the relation between the World and the Word. For a philosopher of language what the word presents is the only method of understanding the Reality. So he explicitly declares: “*Kim asmākam vastugatena vicāreṇa? Arthasosmākam yah śabdenabhidhiyate*” (Of What use to us reflecting on the nature of objects? Object for us is what the word presents.)<sup>16</sup>

## Notes and References

<sup>1</sup>William James, “The Sentiment for Rationality” in *The Writings of William James*, (ed.) J.J. McDermott, New York: Philosophical Library, 1963, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup>P.F. Strawson, *Analysis and Metaphysics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.14.

<sup>3</sup>Gilbert Ryle, *Collected Papers*, Vol. II, p. 350.

<sup>4</sup>J.F. Staal, “Sanskrit Philosophy of Language”, in *Current Trends in Linguistics*, Vol., ed. T.A. Sebeok et al., The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1969, p. 463.

<sup>5</sup>*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.1.2.

<sup>6</sup>*Ākhyeyarūpānām anākhyeyarūpānām ca śabdānām; Bhartṛhari, Vākyapadīya, Vṛtti under Verse, I. 113.*

<sup>7</sup>*Anākhyeya—śabda-nibandhana balānām pravṛtti. Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>*Vākyapadīya, Vṛtti on I.124.*

<sup>9</sup>*Vāgrupataced utkramed avabodhsya śāsvati, Na prakāśam prakāśeta sa hi pratyavamarsini; Vākyapadīya, I.124.*

<sup>10</sup>*Na so'sti pratyayao loke yah śabdānugamad ruteanuviddham ivam jñanam sarvam śabdena bhāṣate. Vākyapadīya, I. 123.*

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid., Vṛtti under I. 118.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid., Vṛtti under I. 121.*

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid., I. 32.*

<sup>14</sup>*Bimal K. Matilal, The Word and the World, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 85.*

<sup>15</sup>It is interesting to note that though the famous idealist F.H. Bradley does not share the same metaphysical view as Bhartṛhari they almost speak in the same language when it comes to the explication of meaning (*Principles of Logic*, vol. I, pp. 6-10). According to Bradley “the idea is the meaning.” Such ideas are pure, abstract and universal. The logical conditions of our judgements reveal that they have two aspects—substantive part and the predicative part, i.e., *that* and *what* of a judgement. According to him our judgement is an act by which attach ‘what’ (ideal content) to the ‘that’ (reality) which is beyond our act. So there is no brute fact to which we can jump with our judgements. The substantive part is purely logical in nature. It is neither meaningful nor meaningless. So meaning is purely adjectival in nature; it is the ‘what’ of the proposition that adds meaningfulness to the subject part. But the predicate or the adjectival content is not complete by itself. They are but the parts of the ‘*meaning whole*’ or the ‘ideal content’. The ideal content is purely universal and abstract in nature, and ‘wandering adjective’, which we cut loose from the conceptual net and apply it to contexts that mind has fixed. The ideal content or meaning is one and whole, a complex totality of qualities and relations. It is we the language speakers who introduce division and distinction, and call these products separate ideas with relations between them. So every judgment is the part of the whole, it is not the relation between two particular ideas, i.e., the subject and predicate. In certain respects Bradley’s views appear very close to that of Bhartṛhari’s theory of *śabdadvaitavāda*. Like Bhartṛhari, Bradley believes that the meaning whole cannot be expressed as such. What we express through language are ‘bits’ or ‘pieces’ of the ‘meaning whole’ by the process of selecting and fixing a particular part of it. Our language does not refer to brute facts directly. So the brute realm of facts are not graspable by the abstracted bits of language. However there is a big difference between Bradley’s and Bhartṛhari’s analysis of language as well as metaphysics. Bhartṛhari does not analyse language in terms of that and what. If there is such a distinction then Bhartṛhari would rather say that both belong to the ‘ideal content’ or ‘meaning whole’. Besides, for Bhartṛhari the absolute metaphysical principle is of the nature of language. But Bradley’s absolutism is not an absolutism of language.

<sup>16</sup>Bhartṛhari, *Mahābhāṣya Dīpikā*, Part I. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1967, p. 28.

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## Le romantisme corrigé: Emma Bovary and *Lucie de Lammermoor*

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In Chapter 14 of Book II of *Madame Bovary*, the pharmacist Homais suggests that in order to amuse Emma Charles should accompany her to Rouen to listen to the famous tenor Lagardy. This conversation takes place in the presence of the priest, M. Bournisien, who, when asked his opinion, declares that he considers music “moins dangereuse pour les mœurs que la littérature.”<sup>1</sup> Early in the novel the narrator has already shown Emma caught up in the passion of reading, especially in her youth when she devours romantic novels. This interest in literature is for her but an excuse to indulge in aimless wanderings of the mind and of the emotions.<sup>2</sup> Books represent to her ports of call on a long voyage which will gradually take her away from the realm of reality to the nebulous realm of fantasy. Since we know that she has already succumbed to the vice of literature, we might wish to agree with the cleric on the relative danger of this art form. His judgment regarding the lesser evil of music, however, is not altogether accurate, for as will be seen, music equals, if not surpasses, literature as a potential temptation for a sensibility such as Emma’s.<sup>3</sup>

There ensues a quasi-philosophical dialogue on the merits of literature and the theatre (a dialogue in which Charles’ only contribution is the dense phrase “sans doute”). When the pharmacist and the doctor are finally alone, Homais paints for Charles a tantalizing picture of what awaits the Bovarys at the opera:

Lagardy neo donnera qu’une seule représentation; il est engagé en Angleterre à des appointments considérables. C’est, à ce qu’on assure, un fameux lapin! il roule sur l’or! il mène avec lui trois maîtresses et son cuisinier! Tous ces grands artistes brûlent la chandelle par les deux bouts; il leur faut une existence dévergondée qui excite un peu l’imagination. Mais ils meurent à l’hôpital, parce qu’ils n’ont pas eu l’esprit, étant jeunes, de faire des économies. (II, 14, 271)

The tone of the discussion of this passage has been lowered from the quasi-philosophical to the sensational. Homais’ enthusiasm has less to do with the work of the artist than with the kind of life he leads. He has moved from the world of aesthetics and morality to that of titillating entertainment and scandal. As he sees it, the life of the artist is indeed extravagant. But there is a price to be paid for such squandering. Artists often end in utter financial misery. As Homais is a solid burgher, he is immune to the blandishments

of entertainment. The world of the artist can only provide him with a momentary source of amusement. Yet, in his own unlettered way, he has learned a valuable lesson. Each choice carries with it a unique responsibility. He, of course, chooses security.

In the case of Emma, though, the distinction is not clear. She cannot, or does not wish to, separate the world of the ideal from that of everyday existence. This ambivalence is played upon by the novelist as he limns the character of the heroine with various lights and shades from his limitless palette. During the composition, of the novel, Flaubert penned the following to Louise Colet in 1853:

Je voudrais écrire tout ce que je vois, non tel qu'il est, mais transfiguré.  
La narration exacte du fait réel le plus magnifique me serait impossible.  
Il me faudrait le broder encore.

He was well aware that the art of embellishment is central to the maturity of the novelist. He must, on the one hand, be scrupulous in the cataloguing of details; on the other hand, he must be equally sensitive to the need for transmuting these data into a creative entity. The combination of the two yields an ambiguity which potentially determines "the reader's action and his final judgment."<sup>5</sup>

In this chapter Flaubert is meticulously preparing for the scene in which Emma—in the company of Charles and later of Léon—leaves a performance of *Luice de Lammermoor* at a crucial point in the dramatic action of the opera. Anyone verse in the work and criticism of Flaubert knows that he could never be accused of *gaspillage*.<sup>6</sup> That he should deal with Emma's responses to Donizetti's opera is a sure sign that the performance is of vital importance not only to the character of Emma herself but also to the technique of the Olympian narrator who is a subtle presence in the novel.

This extensive scene represents a later stage in the erosion of Emma's character or, more accurately in the erosion of her romantic sensibility, a stage in the impossibility of her ever attaining the ideal for which she has been searching in her reveries.<sup>7</sup> Like the wedding, the ball at the Vaubyessard and the agricultural fair, the episode of the operatic performance is one of the principal tableaux in the novel. Her marriage to Charles might be considered as an initiation into life, one that Emma immediately finds disappointing and unfulfilling. The ball rekindles her romantic notions temporarily held in check by the duties of marriage, notions which have lain dormant since childhood in the convent. The memory of pleasure at the Vaubyessard is sufficient to keep her alive until she meets Léon and until she has an affair with Rodolphe, one set against the bovine motif of the agricultural fair. The *Luice* episode is the climactic scene of her unsuccessful quest for the unattainable, her irreparable "dislocation."<sup>8</sup> The world of music, particularly the exaggerated romanticism that is often associated with opera, provides the impetus for Emma to lose control of herself.<sup>9</sup> For her, art and life become totally confused: they now exist as mirror images.

Just as the soprano in *Luice* is about to launch into the "Mad Scene," Emma suddenly loses interest and pleads physical discomfort. To her the style and acting of the singer seem overdone. Emma says, "elle crie trop fort." The presence of Léon has distracted her from the wanderings caused by the music and her own restless imagination,

but the timing of Emma's departure with the beginning of Lucie's "scène de la folie" is a stroke of genius on the part of Flaubert. But putting side by side Lucie's dementia, which has been brought on by her unswerving, faithful love for Edgar (she is forced against her will to marry Bucklaw), with Emma's spiral-like, unrequited longings, the novelist has prepared a scenario which appears accidental but which, in fact, is controlled with masterly effect. Lucie goes mad in the world of art.<sup>10</sup> Emma, now confused by the mirror images, sees in Lucie's condition a premonition (unconscious or subconscious) of what fate has store for her (her unnatural death will be suicide) if she gives herself up completely to the imagination.<sup>11</sup> The gradually increasing excitement of the singer as she becomes unbalanced in the mad scene, climaxed by a stratospheric note above the staff, parallels Emma's own intense mental confusion. That Emma leaves at the beginning of the scene suggests that her "folie" is not fully realized. She is as yet unwilling to pay the price that Lucie has willingly paid, for Emma has not experienced that completeness of love which Lucie fleetingly attained. Emma sees in Lucie the danger of utter commitment and is thus caught in the dilemma of choosing between the life of the imagination and a bourgeois existence. The tensions caused by this dialectic of indecision are manipulated by the narrator with great dexterity. This ambiguity recalls Flaubert's own words:

L'artiste doit être dans son oeuvre comme Dieu dans la Création,  
invisible et tout-puissant, qu'on le sente partout, mais qu'on ne le  
voie pas. (*Corr.*, IV, 164)

The introduction of the operatic scene in chapter 15 illustrates his aesthetic perfectly. Flaubert artfully makes use of music to limit, to correct Emma's undisciplined comprehension of the world about her. Donizetti (and Scott) offers a method of testing Emma's *romantisme déchainé* with a romanticism which is more disciplined, a quality which might well be described as a *romantisme corrigé*.

## II

In 1851, during the course of his voyage to the Middle East, Flaubert attended a performance of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Constantinople.<sup>12</sup> This, of course, was the Italian version of the opera, the version in which the composer and enlisted the aid of Salvatore Cammarano as librettist.<sup>13</sup> The opera was first given in Naples on 26 September 1835 and, according to the composer himself, enjoyed an immense success.<sup>14</sup> Soon after, the opera appeared in numerous European, North and South American countries; by 1845 it has reached even Constantinople. This is the version which Flaubert heard there six years later. There was, however, another *Lucia*, or rather *Lucie de Lammermoor*, which in its own way proved to be a great favorite.<sup>15</sup> It differed from the original in certain respects, and though Flaubert had both versions at his disposal he chose to employ the French version in *Madame Bovary*.

On 6 August 1839, Lucie made its debut in Paris at the Théâtre de la Renaissance. It seems that Donizetti's original motive for a drastic revision was practical rather than aesthetic. Since Antenor Joly's company at the Renaissance was limited both financially and artistically, the composer lent the theatre the sum of 5,000 francs; he engaged Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaëz, two French librettists, to make important changes.

As a result, the opera goer conversant with the Italian *Lucia* will be somewhat surprised at the result. Lucia's lady-in-waiting, Alisa, is missing; some of her music is eliminated; her part in the famous sextet is replaced by a character named Gilbert. The first two scenes of Act One are combined; in the third act, Edgar comes to Lammermoor to challenge Henri (Enrico) to a duel; the role of Raimonde (Raimondo) is suitably abbreviated and adapted to the modest abilities of a minor singer on the roster; finally, the famous harp solo of the Fountain Scene is omitted.<sup>16</sup> Donizetti and his French colleagues then added new elements:

The recitative before *D'un amour qui brave* (*Cruda, funesta, smania*) is much extended, permitting a clearer exposition of the feud. Bringing on Arthur after Henri's cabaletta further serves to elucidate the action. The opening chorus is repeated before the departure of Henri and Arthur. In the printed French score there is no sign of *Regnava nel silenzio* and *Quando rapito in estasi*, not even in an appendix; instead Lucie sings the double aria from *Rosmunda d'Inghilterra*. Further changes include the rewriting of the recitative at the beginning of Act 2 up to Lucie's entrance. The rest of the act is the same except for changes before the sextet and for a very abbreviated stretta in the finale. Act 3 begins with the chorus in the wings singing one verse of *Entourons de nos vœux* (*D'immenso giubilo*) before Edgar arrives to deliver his challenge. After he leaves, the chorus repeats this verse on stage. The Mad scene is unchanged, but the brief scene immediately following it is omitted. At the end of the Tomb Scene, Henri appears just after Edgar's suicide and expresses his remorse.

Although the French *Lucie* lacks the variety and spaciousness of the Italian original, it is not completely inferior. Particularly, the first scene in the French version<sup>17</sup> explains the background to the plot more clearly than in the Italian.

It is fortunate that Donizetti and his librettists were able, while honoring financial necessity, to more clearly define the dramatic situation.

According to the dictates of realism, it would be proper for Flaubert to use the French *Lucie* in his novel, for this is the version which circulated throughout the French provinces after its initial performances in Paris in 1839 (although the Italian *Lucia* had been heard in Paris as early as 1837). In addition, the French version would elicit a more direct response from Emma, for the background of the plot in the French version is more sharply etched. Lucie's romantic disposition and her steadfast, pure love for Edgar are emphasized. Because of her unwillingness to compromise her fidelity, she becomes deranged; she retains, nevertheless, her strong sense of responsibility. This is in ironic contrast to Emma's own predicament as she witnesses the performances.

### III

Emma and Charles arrive unfashionably early for *Lucie de Lammermoor* ("devant les portes du théâtre, qui étaient encore fermées"). Emma has ample time to

savor the excitement of the crowd and to bask in the knowledge that she and Charles are in the best seats. She is so awed by the surroundings that she experiences a "battement de coeur," which heightens her emotions and prepares her to participate vicariously and *dangerously* in the lives of the characters on the stage.

As the opera begins and Emma listens to the music, she is immediately transported to scenes of her childhood. She moves effortlessly from Donizetti to Scott to her own feelings:

Elle se retrouvait dans les lectures de sa jeunesse en plein Walter Scott. Il lui semblait entendre, à travers le brouillard, le son des cornemuses écossaises se répéter sur les bruyères. D'ailleurs, le souvenir du roman facilitant l'intelligence du libretto, elle suivait l'intrigue phrase à phrase, tandis que insaisissables pensées qui lui revenaient se dispersaient aussitôt sous les rafales de la musique. (II, 15, 274)

The opera becomes a device for Emma to recall the delights of her childhood when she could satisfy the whims of romantic youth. It will be remembered that as early as Chapter 5 of Part I, immediately after her marriage to Charles, Emma finds herself brutally disappointed by her expectations and the actual experience.

Avant qu'elle se mariât, elle avait cru avoir de l'amour; mais le bonheur qui aurait dû résulter de cet amour n'étant pas venu, il fallait qu'elle se fut trompée, songea-t-elle. Et Emma cherchait à savoir ce que l'on entendait au juste dans la vie par les mots de *félicité*, de *passion* et d'*ivresse*, qui lui avaient paru si beaux dans les livres. (I, 5, 69)

Already, as a newly-married woman, Emma is incapable of distinguishing between the exigencies of everyday life and the excitement of life as it is found in works of art, especially in literature. Even earlier in the novel the narrator embroiders her childhood and the experiences she relished at an early age:

Il fallait qu'elle pût retirer des choses une sorte de profit personnel; et elle rejetait comme inutile tout ce qui ne contribuait pas à la consommation immédiate de son cœur—étant de tempérament plus sentimental qu'artiste, cherchant des émotions et non des paysages. (i, 6, 71)

At the age of thirteen Emma Rouault begins the inevitable journey that is to remove her completely from reality. Furthermore, her attraction to Sir Walter Scott, the literary source of Donizetti's opera, is purely an extension of her own voluptuous fantasy:<sup>18</sup>

Avec Walter Scott, plus tard, elle s'éprit de choses historiques, rêva bahuts, salle des gardes et ménestrels. Elle aurait voulu vivre dans quelque vieux manoir, comme ces châtelaines au long corsage qui, sous le trèfle des ogives, passaient leurs jours, le coude sur la pierre et le menton dans la main, à regarder venir du fond de la campagne un

cavalier à plume blanche qui galope sur un cheval noir. (I, 6, 72)

When Lucie first appears on the stage, her longings immediately become Emma's:

Lucie entama d'un air grave sa cavatine en sol majeur; elle se plaighait d'amour, elle demandait des ailes. Emma, de même, aurait voulu, fuyant la vie, s'envoler dans une étreinte. Tout à coup, Edgar Lagardy parut. (II, 15, 275)

Yet the actions of the operatic heroine are of minor consequence when the tenor makes his initial appearance.

The music is momentarily forgotten as the narrator describes in minute detail the tenor, a description which would be in keeping with Emma's romantic nature. It is also a corroboration of Homais's sketch of the artist in the previous chapter and substantiates the romantic temperament in an exaggerated form.<sup>19</sup>

Il avait une de ces pâleurs splendides qui donnent quelque chose de la majesté des marbres aux races ardentes du Midi. Sa taille vigoureuse était prise dans un pourpoint de couleur brune; un petit poignard ciselé lui battait sur la cuisse gauche, et il roulait des regards langoureusement en découvrant ses dents blanches. On disait qu'une princesse polonaise, l'écoutant un soir chanter sur la plage de Biarritz, où il radoubaient des chaloupes, en était devenue amoureuse. Elle s'était ruinée à cause de lui. Il l'avait plantée là pour d'autres femmes, et cette célébrité sentimentale ne laissait pas que de servir à sa réputation artistique. Le cabotin diplomate avait même soin de faire toujours glisser dans les réclames une phrase poétique sur la fascination de sa personne et la sensibilité de son âme. Un bel organe, un imperturbable aplomb, plus de tempérament que d'intelligence et plus d'emphase que de lyrisme, achevaient de rehausser cette admirable nature de charlatan, où il y avait du coiffeur et du toréador. (II, 15, 275)

The singer recalls certain characteristics of none other than Rodolphe Boulanger, Emma's lover, whom the narrator has already described as

de tempérament brutal et d'intelligence perspicace, ayant d'ailleurs beaucoup fréquenté les femmes et s'y connaissant bien. Celle-là lui avait paru jolie: il y rêvait donc, et à son mari.

Je le crois très bête. Elle en est fatiguée sans doute. Il porte des ongles sales et une barbe de trois jours. Tandis qu'il trotte à ses malades, elle reste à ravauder des chaussettes. Et on s'ennuie! en voudrait habiter la ville, danser la polka tous les soirs! Pauvre petite femme! Ça baille après l'amour, comme une carpe après l'eau sur une table de cuisine. Avec trois mots de galanterie, cela vous adorerait, j'en suis sûr! Ce serait tendre! Charmant!.... Oui, mais comment s'en débarrasser ensuite? (II, 7, 175)

Having seen Emma briefly, Rodolphe loses no time in setting up the strategy of the chase, the seduction, and the inevitable abandonment. But Emma is as unwilling to recognize this heartless, realistic side of his nature as she is unwilling to give up her romantic illusions.

The appearance of Edgar Lagardy unlocks Emma's memory; he and Rodolphe are almost indistinguishable:

Dès la première scène, il enthousiasma. Il pressait Lucie dans ses bras, il la quittait, il semblait désespéré; il avait des éclats de colère, puis des râles élégiaques d'une douceur infinie, et les notes s'échappaient de son cou nu, pleines de sanglots et de baisers. (I, 15, 275)

Emma becomes more and more involved in the dramatic situations:

Emma se penchait pour le voir, égratignant avec ses ongles le velours de sa loge. Elle s'emplissait le cœur de ses lamentations mélodieuses qui se traînaient à l'accompagnement des contrebasses, comme des cris de naufrages dans le tumulte d'une tempête. Elle reconnaissait tous les enivrements et les angoisses dont elle avait manqué mourir. La voix de la chanteuse ne lui semblait être que le retentissement de la conscience, et cette illusion qui la charmait, quelque chose même de sa vie. Mais personne sur la terre ne l'avait aimée d'un pareil amour. Il ne pleurait pas comme Edgar, le dernier soir, au clair de lune lorsqu'ils se disaient: 'A demain; à demain!... La salle craquait sous les bravos; on recommença la strette entière; les amoureux parlaient des fleurs de leur tombe, de serment, d'exil, de fatalité, d'espérance, et quand ils poussèrent l'adieu final, Emma jeta un cri aigu, qui se confondit avec la vibration des derniers accords. (II, 15, 276-77)

The *dramma per musica* has so transported her that her memory of past events gradually blurs. When she contrasts the parting of the operatic lovers with her own adieu to Rodolphe, she is inaccurate in her recall. It is Emma who repeats the phrase "à demain." Rodolphe is conspicuously mute.<sup>20</sup> No longer capable of making an objective statement about the past, she relinquishes her ability to judge and gradually confounds Edgar with Rodolphe. As a result, the performance becomes a contest of wills as to which of the two charlatans, Edgar or Rodolphe, is uppermost in her mind. Her physical discomfiture, which manifests itself in her scratching the material of the loge with her fingernails, terminates in a shrill cry which is mingled with the last notes of the scene.

Charles, who is in the company of Emma, and who has followed the story as well as he could for one not acquainted with Scott or Donizetti or the Librettists, asks questions of his wife when he does not comprehend the plot. Though Emma goes to some pains to explain the background of the opera—Flaubert even quotes directly a phrase from the text "J'aime Lucie et je m'en crois aimée" (the sort of phrase that would appeal to Charles, for it expresses his own love for Emma)—Charles does not understand what it is all about.<sup>21</sup>

Il avouit, du reste, ne pas comprendre l'histoire—a cause de la musique—qui nuisait beaucoup aux paroles. (II, 15, 276)

Yet in making this observation Charles has unwittingly touched upon one of the key ideas in the novel, the distinction between understanding and feeling, between reason and the emotions. Charles tried to be reasonable:

—C'est que j'aime, reprit-il en se penchant sur son épaule, à me rendre compte, tu sais bien. (II, 15, 276)

His lack of knowledge regarding the plot is a direct parallel to his own existence and is reflected by his being unaware of Emma's love affairs. He simply does not know what is going on, either on the stage or in real life.

There ensues on the stage the scene in which Lucie is about to marry Arthur Bucklaw because she believes Edgar to have been faithless (though, in truth, he has remained faithful):

Lucie s'avancait, à demi soutenue par ses femmes, une couronne d'oranger dans les cheveux, et plus pâle que le satin blanc de sa robe. Emma rêvait au jour de son mariage; et elle se revoyait là-bas, au milieu des blés, sur le petit sentier, quand on marchait vers l'église. Pourquoi donc n'avait-elle pas, comme celle-là, résisté, supplié? Elle était joyeuse, au contraire, sans s'apercevoir, de l'abîme où elle se précipitait... Ah!, si, dans la fraîcheur de sa beauté, avant les souillures du mariage et la désillusion de l'adultère, elle avait pu placer sa vie sur quelque grand cœur solide, alors, la vertu, la tendresse, les voluptés et le devoir se confondant, jamais elle ne serait descendue d'une félicité si haute. Mais ce bonheur-là, sans doute, était un monsonge imaginé pour le désespoir de tout désir. Elle connaissait à présent la petitesse des passions que l'art exagérait. S'efforçant donc d'en détourner sa pensée, Emma voulait ne plus voir dans cette reproduction de ses douleurs qu'une fantaisie plastique bonne à amuser les yeux, et même elle souriait intérieurement d'une pitié dédaigneuse quand, au fond du théâtre, sous la portière de velours, un homme apparut en manteau noir. (II, 15, 276-77)

Lucie's torments impel Emma to once more go back in time to a world before the shabby institutions of marriage and adultery, a world in which she could enjoy an idealistic union. In such a place, love and virtue and passion and responsibility would be indistinguishable. As she tries to fortify herself against the attraction of the performance and as she attempts to assert a certain amount of objectivity, the magnetic Edgar reappears to mesmerize her:

Il devait avoir, pensait-elle, un intarissable amour, pour en déverser sur la foule à si larges effluves. Toutes ses velléités de dénigrement s'évanouissaient sous la poésie du rôle qui l'envahissait, et, entraînée vers l'homme par l'illusion du personnage, elle tâcha de se figurer sa vie, cette vie retentissante, extraordinaire, splendide, et qu'elle aurait pu mener, cependant, si le hasard l'avait voulu. Ils se seraient connus, il se seraient aimés! Avec lui, par tout les royaumes

de l'Europe, elle aurait voyagé de capitale en capitale, partageant ses fatigues et son orgueil, ramassant les fleurs qu'on lui jetait, brochant elle-même ses costumes; puis, chaque soir, au fond d'une loge, derrière la grille à treillis d'or, elle eût recueilli, béante, les expansions de cette qui n'aurait chanté que pour elle seule; de la scène, tout en jouant, il l'aurait regardée. Mais une folie la saisit: il la regardait, c'est sûr! Elle eut envie de courir dans ses bras pour se réfugier en sa force, comme dans l'incarnation de l'amour même et de lui dire, de s'écrier: 'Enlève-moi, emmène-moi, partons! à toi à toi! toutes mes ardeurs et tous mes rêves! (II, 15, 277-78)

Emma is fascinated by the splendor of this man who would take her away to see the world (as Rodolphe would not do) and who would remain with her in an everlasting union. Suddenly, she even believes that Edgar Lagardy looks up at her; she wishes to be carried into the kingdom of ardor and of dreams.<sup>22</sup> Her reveries are interrupted when the curtain is abruptly lowered at the end of the scene. This gesture marks the end of the act in *Lucie*; it further signifies the impossibility of Emma ever realizing her wish.

Léon appears during the intermission, met by Charles and escorted to the loge that the Bovarys occupy, and then presented to Emma, who, by his very presence vacillates between remembrance and the present. She gives Léon her hand,

sans doute obéissant à l'attraction d'une volonté plus forte. Elle ne l'avait pas sentie depuis ce soir de printemps où il pleuvait sur les feuilles vertes, quand ils se dirent adieu, debout au bord de la fenêtre. Mais, vite, se rappelant à la convenance de la situation, elle secoua dans un effort cette torpeur de ses souvenirs et se mit à balbutier des phrases rapides. (II, 15, 279)

As in the case of Edgar, Emma is flustered by the presence of a personality stronger than hers. As the third act of *Lucie* commences, the music and the drama recede into the distance,

comme si les instruments fussent devenus moins sonores et les personnages plus reculés: elle se rappelait les parties de cartes chez le pharmacien et la promenade chez la nourrice, les lectures sous la tonnelle, less tête-à-tête au coin du feu, tout ce pauvre amour si clame et si long, si discret, si tendre, et qu'elle avait oublié cependant. Pourquoi donc revenait-il? Quelle combinaison d'aventures le remplaçait dans sa vie? Il se tenait derrière elle, s'appuyant de l'épaule contre la cloison; et, de temps à autre, elle se sentait frissonner sous le souffle tiède de ses narines qui lui descendait dans la chevelure. (II, 15, 279-80)

The opera becomes more and more vague as Emma's mind wanders back to her idyll with Léon. His immediate presence has awakened her to the past.

He suggests to Emma and Charles that they leave the opera in order to take

some refreshment, but the husband of Emma, obviously engrossed in the performance, wishes to linger a little longer.

—Ah! pas encore! restons! dit Bovary. Elle a les cheveux dénoués  
cela promet d'être tragique. (II, 15, 280)

With evident gusto Charles has been enjoying himself sufficiently to see the sequel to this stage drama. His delight at the prospect of something tragic is spontaneous ("la franchise"), but this anticipation of Lucie's "Scène de la folie" is not shared by his wife:

—Elle cris trop fort, dit-elle en se tournant vers Charles, qui écoutait. (II, 15, 280)

The opera has so disturbed her that she can no longer abide the consequences of the implied suggestions of the plot.<sup>23</sup> Lucie goes mad; this potential dagger of unrequited love frightens Emma. If she were to follow the convention of the imagination as it is depicted on the stage, she would be headed for possible doom. One must also pay a price in the rarefied atmosphere of the ideal, Emma, sparked by the sensual presence of Léon, conveniently forgets her artistic responsibility.

As the Bovarys and Léon are enjoying a sherbet, the spectators who have remained until the end repeat the strains of Edgar's "O bel ange, ma Lucie!" As they leave, Léon tells the company that Lagardy is nothing like the other famous tenors of his day. Charles, who does not wish Emma to miss the last act, impulsively suggests that she stay another day in Rouen. Just as suddenly, Léon changes his tactics:

Et, changeant de manoeuvre devant cette occasion inattendue qui  
s'offrait à son espoir, le jeune homme entama l'éloge de Lagardy dans  
le morceau final, C'était que chose de superbe, de sublime! Alors  
Charles insista...(II, 15, 281)

Charles, the frank, open man, has inadvertently furthered the plot in which Emma and Léon will engage in an adulterous affair. From this moment on, Emma is so saturated with dreams that she shuttles back from the world of the imagination to the world of unpleasant existence without quite knowing which possesses the greater reality. Donizetti and Scott trigger her emotional "dislocation." The tenor, she thought, even went so far as to look at her directly. But the sequence is interrupted. The presence of Léon is the result of her wish-fulfillment. For want of better substitute, he will appear to Emma as the ideal, a mistake which will terminate in Emma's losing complete control of herself. Like the operatic heroines, she will die a lingering, agonizing death.<sup>24</sup>

En effect, elle regarda tout autour d'elle, lentement, comme quelqu'un  
qui se réveille d'un songe, puis, d'une voix distincts, elle demanda  
son miroir, et elle resta dessus quelque temps; jusqu'au moment où  
de grosses larmes lui décollèrent des yeux. Alors elle se renversa la  
tête en poussant un soupir et recombait sur l'oreiller... Emma se releva  
comme un cadavre que l'on galvanise, les cheveux dénoués, la prune fixe,  
béante... Une convulsion la rabattit sur le matelas. Tous  
s'approchèrent. Elle n'existait plus. (III, 8, 385-86)

The final tableau—worthy of a Massenet or a Verdi or a Puccini—contains all the ingredients associated with the operatic repertory.

Though pain and suffering prevent Emma from appreciating the dramatic effect of the final hours of her life, she has died in the manner of the literary and musical heroines. Immediately before expiring, Emma sits up. "les cheveux dénoués," which again recalls what Charles had noticed during the presentation of *Lucie* at the Rouen opera:

—Elle a les cheveux dénoués: cela promet d'être tragique.

This *coup de théâtre* is very much to the point and in keeping with operatic Emma that Flaubert so carefully depicts in Chapter 15 of Book II. When she takes poison, Emma at last realizes the responsibility of her existence in the same way that Lucie goes mad when she is forced to marry Arthur Bucklaw. At the time of the "Mad Scene" Emma was yet unwilling to come to terms with her life. However, while listening to the raucous singing of the blind man, she sees everything clearly in an instant. The imagination, contrary to what she had earlier thought, makes certain demands, has its own law. Her subsequent death fuses the mirror images of the real and the ideal.

Through the use of the hidden personality of the narrator, Flaubert objectifies Emma's impossible craving, gives her wish boundaries and limits.<sup>25</sup> He imparts to the traditional aura of romanticism a corrective which places sentimental longing into a more universal framework. In addition to enhancing the character of the protagonist, the novelist intensifies the layer of experience to produce an ambiguity of the highest artistic order.

### Notes & Reference

<sup>1</sup> Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, ed. Maurice Nadeau (Lausanne: Editions Rencontre, 1964), p. 269. All subsequent references to the text will be to this edition.

<sup>2</sup> cf. P.M. Wetherill, *Flaubert et la création littéraire* (Paris: Librairie Nizer, 1964), p. 235: "L'attitude d'esprit d'Emma est conditionnée par ses mauvaises lectures—tout son drame en découle."

<sup>3</sup> See Charles Carlut, *La correspondance de Flaubert: étude et répertoire critique* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1968), especially, pp. 269-70, for keys to music in Flaubert's writings.

<sup>4</sup> Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance*, III, ed. Louis Conard (Paris: Conard, 1926-1933), 320. Subsequent reference to *Correspondance* will be to this edition.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin F. Bart, "Art, Energy and Aesthetic Distance," in *Madame Bovary and the Critics*, ed. Benjamin F. Bart (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1966), p.85. All subsequent references to this book will be designated *Critics*.

<sup>6</sup> cf. Wetherill, p. 98. See also Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: ébauches et fragments inédits*, ed. Gabrielle Leleu (Paris: Conard, 1936)

<sup>7</sup> See Victor Brombert, *The Novels of Flaubert: A Study of Themes and Techniques* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), p. 55: "The chapter on Emma's education is revealing, not merely because it proposes a parable of the entire novel, but because the progression of images corresponds to a pattern repeated throughout the book: from ennui to expectation, to escape, to confusion, back to ennui and to a yearning for nothingness."

<sup>8</sup> cf. Benjamin F. Bart, *Flaubert* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1967), p. 204 and p. 300.

<sup>9</sup> cf. Gary Schmidgall, *Literature as Opera* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press), p. 113: “The heart of bel canto opera lies in this almost orgasmic pleasure ... in the powerful airborne melody climaxing somewhere above the staff.”

<sup>10</sup> cf. Schmidgall, p.117. Donizetti’s *Lucia* is considered as an archetypal example of unrequited love in the bel canto repertory.

<sup>11</sup> cf. Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama* (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 155: “Furthermore, during scenes of ‘*delirio*’ or ‘*sogno*’ or ‘*sonnambulismo*’ a demented or dreaming character often recalled previous music. The right tune might restore him (her, usually) to sanity. But since the person may be supposed actually to ‘hear things’, this usage should also be considered literal—the literal representation of an abnormal state of mind.” cf. Harry Levin, “The Female Quixote,” in *Critics*, p. III.

<sup>12</sup> cf. Bart. *Flaubert*, p. 204.

<sup>13</sup> The Italian and English texts of the opera will be found in Gaetano Donizetti, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, trans. Ellen H. Bleiler (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1972)—hereafter referred to as Bleiler.

<sup>14</sup> Bleiler, p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> The text of the French version with an English translation can be found in Gaetano Donizetti, *Lucie de Lammermoor* (Napoléonville: Jean Schweitzer, 1861).

<sup>16</sup> See William Ashbrook, *Donizetti* (London: Cassell, 1965), p. 424. cf. Bleiler, p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> Ashbrook, pp. 424-25.

<sup>18</sup> For the differences between Flaubert’s Emma and Scott’s Lucy, see *The Bride of Lammermoor* (London: The Hawarden Press, 1893), p. 39, for Scott’s description of the heroine: “Left to the impulse of her own taste and feelings, Lucy, Ashton was peculiarly accessible to those of a romantic cast. Her secret delight was in the old legendary tales of ardent devotion and unalterable affection, chequered as they so often are with strange adventures and supernatural horrors. This was her favoured fairy realm, and here she erected her aerial palaces. But it was only in secret that she laboured at this delusive, thought delightful architecture.” See Schmidgall, pp. 133-147, for an analysis of the influence of Sir Walter Scott on Gaetano Donizetti.

<sup>19</sup> See Margaret Tillett. “On reading *Madame Bovary*,” in *Critics*, p. 3: “Another of the worst tendencies of the Romantic disposition—the tendency to self-dramatization—is very marked in her.”

<sup>20</sup> II, 13, 249.

<sup>21</sup> See Brombert, p. 42.

<sup>22</sup> See John C. Lapp, “Art and Hallucination in Flaubert,” in *Critics*, p. 181.

<sup>23</sup> See Jean-Pierre Richard, *Bittérature et sensations* (Paris: Editions du Seuil), p. 202.

<sup>24</sup> See Alexandre Dumas, *La Dame aux camélias*—written in 1848—(Paris: Editions Athena, 1948), p. 271, for a parallel between Emma’s death and that of Marguerite Gautier, the literary source for Verdi’s *La Traviata*.

<sup>25</sup> cf. Victor Brombert, *Flaubert par lui-même* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971), pp. 114-15.

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## Metaphorical Structures in the Similes of Kālidāsa

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The Sanskrit Poeticians define poetry as figurative speech (*kāvyaṃ alankārah*). The tropes or semantic figures contribute the cellular structure of the body of poetry (*kāvya śārīra*). By using tropes (*arthālanikāras*), poets not only expand the spectrum of mental images but also verbalize such reflections transformed into words of figurative language. Here, language works as an organic entity where matter and manner, thought and expression are indissolubly unified. Language functions on the twin axis of selection and combination in accordance with paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships for constructing the verbal code. Therefore poetry can only be understood by a minute study of the language in which it is realized.

Since poetic language is “the language at full stretch” (Nowotny, 123), words play an important role in this creative scheme<sup>1</sup>. Bhāmaha opines that *kāvya* formation is like stringing of a garland. As flowers with different fragrances, various forms, kinds and colours are available to a garland maker, words of different sounds, meanings, forms, types and associations are similarly available to the poet. As fragrance is the most prominent quality of the flowers, so also meaning is the soul of the word. It is on the element of meaning (*arthatattva*) that the whole importance of a word rests.

Vāmana, who introduced “*śabdapāka*” in his *Kāvyaśārīrāsūtra*, signifies it with special reference to “*vaidharbhī*” style defining that the delightful effect of the maturity of words (*śabdapāka*) results from what he considers to be the best mode of diction (*vaidharbhī rīti*). He describes that in it the excellence of a word quickens and the unreal appears as real. He explains that the “*śabdapāka*” occurs when the words are chosen in such a way that they cannot bear exchange of synonyms<sup>2</sup>. Ivor Richards also seems to agree with Vāmana when he perceives that in the hands of a creative writer language acquires a life and identity of its own (1936: 131). Language, therefore, becomes—both code and message—a system of systems of signs, a sign being an intrinsic and indissoluble combination of perceptible *signans* and an interpretable



*signatum*. Nevertheless, it has to be kept in mind that some linguistic signs occur both in the code and in the message; others occur only in the messages.

It is interesting that both the Indian and Western Poeticians recognize figurative language as a code which is opaque and indirect. Bhāmaha speaks that deviant expression is the natural language of poetry. Descriptions such as “The sun has gone down”, “The moon is shining”, “The birds are returning to their nests”, are, in the opinion of some theorists, pieces of good poetry. Bhāmaha, however, thinks otherwise. He poses a question: “What kind of poetry is this?”<sup>3</sup> In his view such descriptions are only pieces of information sentences (*vārta*) bereft of poetic beauty. Others such as Ruyyaka, Kṣemendra, Kuntaka, Maṃmaṭa and Viśwanātha, building on these ideas also feel that the unexpressed goes to embellish the expressed, which shines in its undimmed splendour and consequently captivates the minds of the connoisseurs.

Therefore, an expression is understood as figurative, both in the Oriental and Occidental views, when its literal meaning is unacceptable because it contradicts our knowledge of the world. From the semiotic point of view, to use Saussurean terms, we observe that in a tropological sign the usual *signifier-signified* relationship is disrupted. “The oscillation between several semantic planes, typical of the poetic context, loosens up the bond between sign and the object. The denotative precision arrived by ‘practical language’ gives way to connotative density and wealth of associations” (Erich, 185). Therefore, the potentiality of various figurative transfers leads to the ‘levels of meaning’ inherent in the text. Nevertheless, the multifunctionality of the text may lead to a variety of different interpretations depending on the hierarchization of various functions.

The question—“what makes a Mahākavi?”—gets answered when a poet is conscious of all those factors mentioned above. The key lies in the art of employment of limited medium of language having unlimited possibilities. It is the skill of expressing the deepest meaning in the fewest words which is considered the sign of a great writer. Knowing the language inside out along with the quality of being a genius certainly helps a creative writer achieve excellence.

A poet like Kālidāsa exploits more consistently the full potential of language. After Vālmiki, only Kālidāsa is such a poet who could excel in writing in metaphorical language with such maturity. We find all elements of best poetry such as: *guṇa*, *rīti*, *alanīkāra*, *rasa*, *dhvani* etc. in his poetry. He had nothing before him to look up as

precedence of style except the *Nāṭya-Śāstra*. Nevertheless, through poetry, he changed a mere skeleton in a beautiful figure by investing it with a fresh poetic embellishment or has turned ore into gold by superfine, concealing ugliness by splendour and brilliance. He, therefore, stands supreme in the whole range of Sanskrit literature and has earned the richest deserving tributes and eulogies in glorious terms for his literary flourishes from the Eastern and the Western critics and scholars. “Kālidāsa is certainly a poet’s poet” (Balakrishnan 3). Jayadeva in his *Gītagovinda* has called him *Kavikula-guru* (qtd. in Balakrishnan 6).

To build the metaphoric paradigm working in poetic language and to substantiate the hypothesis developed above, I’ll make an attempt to analyze a simile culled from *Meghadūtam*. The simile will be analyzed in three strata. The first layer will unfold the grammatical structure of the unit under analysis and will present the range of lexemes in the vocabulary i.e. lexicon of the given language. The second layer would construct the underlying proposition and the conceptual structure. And finally, the third layer will unfold the pragmatic value of the lexemes and the utterance; then unroll the suggestion constructing its emotive value.

#### **Meghadūtam:**

*Pādānindoramṛtasisirañjalamārgapraaviṣam*

*Pūrvaprītyā gatamabhimukham sannivṛttam tatheva/*

*Cakṣuḥ khedātsalilla-gurūbhiḥ pakṣmabhiḥ cchādayantīm*

*sthalakamalinīm na prabhuḍhām na suptām //*

*Uttara Megha, Sl.-30)*

[ (Her) covering with her eyelashes, heavy with tears caused by sorrow, the eye turned, owing to delight previously felt towards the rays of the moon cool with nectar, entering through the lattice-holes, but fallen back as quickly; and (thereby) resembling a land-lotus plant, on a cloudy day, (with its lotus) neither opened nor closed up. ]

#### **Level<sub>1</sub>: The Linguistic structure:**

The first two feet of this verse stand as a pre-modifier for ‘*Cakṣuḥ*’ (the eye) of the Yakṣiṇī. Therefore, I shall not give a detailed IC for this clause and would attend to the main clause furnishing the simile.

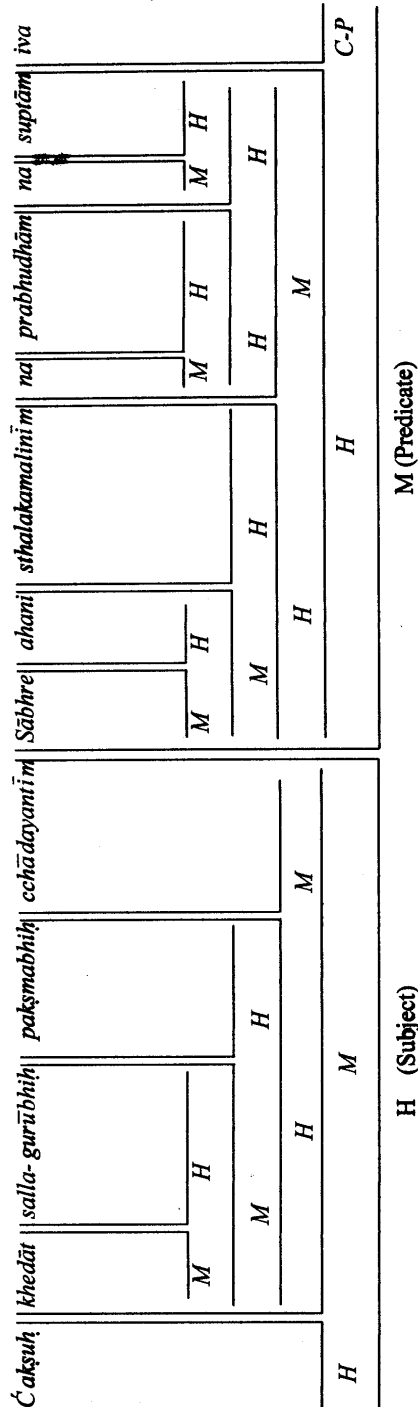


Fig.1

*Ākṣuḥ* – Neuter Singular Noun, *Khedāt* – Fifth Inflectional Singular Noun, *Salila-gurūbhīḥ* – *Salilen gurūṇi salilgurūṇi* i.e. Third Determinative Compound Noun, *Pakṣmabhiḥ* – Third Inflectional Plural Noun, *Cchādayanti* – *√chad* (root) + *śr* (Present Continuous Tense Affix) + *ī* (Feminine Suffix) = Second Inflectional Singular Noun, *Sābhre* – *abhren seha vartate sābhre tasmin* i.e. Attributive Compound Noun in Seventh Inflection, *Ahani* – Singular Noun in Seventh Inflection, *Sthalakamalinīm* – Singular Noun in Second Inflection, *Naprabudhām* – *pra* (prefix) + *√budh* (root) + *ta* (kta – Past Passive Participle) + *ā* (Feminine Suffix) = *prabudh* + second Singular Inflection = *prabudhām* + *na* (negative prefix) = Negative, Neuter, Singular Determinate Second Inflectional Abstract Noun, *Nasuptām* – *√swap* + *ta* (Past Passive Participle) + *ā* (Feminine Suffix) = *suptām* + *na* (negative prefix) = Negative, Neuter, Singular Determinate Second Inflectional Abstract Noun.

The phrase “*naprabudhām nasuptām*” applies both to the synecdochic Tenor “*Ākṣuḥ*” which stands as a part for the whole i.e. *Yakṣiṇi* and the vehicle “*Sthalakamalinīm*” thereby presenting the common ground for comparison. I call the Tenor synecdochic because “*Ākṣuḥ*” is neuter gender whereas “*Sthalakamalinīm*” is feminine gender and the common ground is also made feminine by adding the feminine suffix ‘*ā*’ to the past passive participial root form as discussed above. Kālidāsa, as a poet, is skilled and dext so much so that he maintains an equation regarding the number, gender and person of the objects of description. Since eyes by themselves can neither sleep nor awake voluntarily, the actual comparison is constructed between the *Yakṣiṇi* and the land-lotus plant. This will further be clarified in Level<sub>2</sub>. Hence:

Tenor : *Yakṣiṇayā Ākṣuḥ*  
 Vehicle : *Sthalakamalinīm*  
 Common ground : *na prabudhām na suptām*  
 Connector : *iva*

To understand the simile more clearly, the literal and the figurative elements are separated:

L : *Ākṣuḥ khedātsalila - gurūbhīḥ*

F : *pakṣmabhiḥ cchādayanti* *na prabudhām na suptām*  
*Sābhreahanīva sthalakamalinīm*

These text-gaps can possibly be filled literally as:

Ten : *Ākṣuḥ khedātsalila - gurūbhīḥ*

*pakṣmabhiḥ cchādayanti* [ *duhsahatvāt* ] *na prabudhām na suptām*

Veh : [ *Suryaprabhām vinā* ] *Sābhreahanīva sthalakamalinīm* [ *nā praphullitā* ]

Lexical Choice:

The vehicle ‘land-lotus’ has been chosen from a range of lexical sets present in the lexicon. The word ‘land-lotus’ falls under the lexical category of Nouns. The table below presents the possible lexical sets:

Lexical category (N)	Lexical sets
(sthalā) Kamalinīm	Set <sub>1</sub> Yūthikā, Ketakī, Kukubhī, Kandalī, Kesara, Navajapā, Kurabakī, Śirīṣā, Kundaḥsepā, Kadambinī, Kumudini, Mālatī, Lodhrā, Maṃjarī, Mandāruppa, Kutujakusuma
	Set <sub>2</sub> Nīlakamalinī, Swarnakamalinī, Madhvīlatā

This brings us now to the level of proposition and conceptual structure.

## Level<sub>1</sub>:

### The Propositional Structure:

I shall again remind here that the literal unit is labeled as: 'REF<sub>L</sub>' kept under the linguistic 'Frame' and the non-literal unit is labeled as: 'Pred.' kept under the linguistic 'Focus'. Any non-literal concept being built in the 'linguistic frame' is termed as: 'REF<sub>F</sub>' and the implicit literal referent constructed from the co-text or the context is kept in inverted commas (" "). Any modifier is labeled as: 'MOD'.

### Tenor:

		Pred.		REF <sub>L</sub>
P1	(	pakṣmabhiḥ cchādayantim	)	Ākṣuḥ
		Focus		Frame
P2	(	REF <sub>F</sub> Ākṣuḥ	)	"Sādhvī "
		Focus		Frame
P3	(	MOD Sādhvī	)	"Yakṣiṇi "

### Vehicle:

		REF <sub>L</sub>	
P1	(	MOD Sthala	Kamalini)

The proposition indicates that it is the Yakṣiṇi which is compared with the land-lotus plant. Therefore, conceptually the Yakṣiṇi is mapped from the source domain to the target domain on the basis of comparison.

These domains can be determined by using semantic markers:

Yakṣiṇi (Ākṣuḥ)	Kamalini
[ + animate]	[ - animate]
[ + human ]	[ - human]
[ + specific]	[ - specific]
[ + generic]	[ + generic]
[ - having stalk]	[ + having stalk]
[ - hydrophyte]	[ + hydrophyte]
[ - floral]	[ + floral]

The 'Kamalini' is also associated with the concepts like: being beautiful, lustrous, long, sleek, with a halo and affected by sun and water. Besides, if the water level rises, it rises with it but if the level recedes, it does not leave its station.

### Level<sub>2</sub>:

#### Message:

To speak in terms of English, the common ground is functioning as an adjective, which applies both to the synecdochic Tenor and the Vehicle equally as:

(Yakṣiṇiyā) Ākṣuḥ → na prabudhām na suptām → sthalakamalini

In this phrase, the verb root 'budh' has been prefixed by the prefix 'pra' [ pra + 'budh = prabudh ] which presents an interesting study.

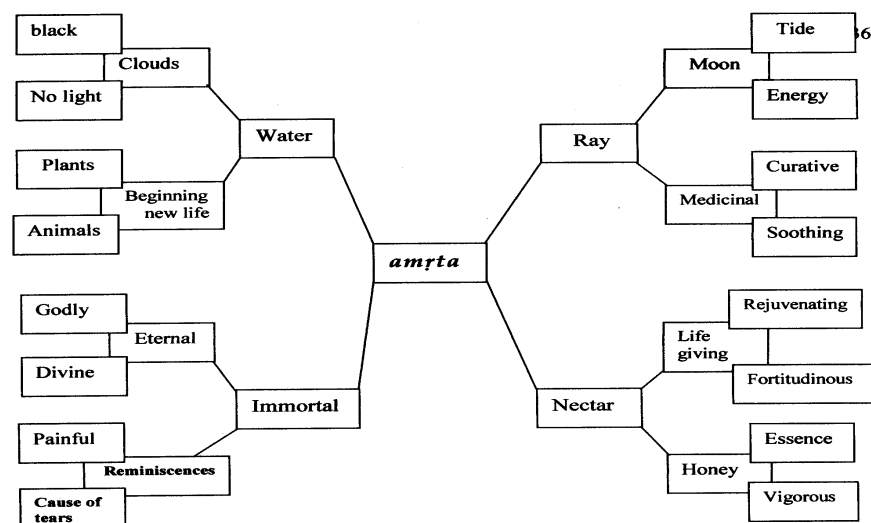
The word 'Prabudh' has the following meanings:

- ☐ wake or be awakened
- ☐ expand, open (flower)
- ☐ recognize
- ☐ developed, manifested; begun to take effect (spell)
- ☐ clear-sighted, wise
- ☐ recognized, enlightened (mind)
- ☐ inform ; teach, instruct; admonish
- ☐ awake, blown (flower)
- ☐ waken, rouse; cause to expand or open

And 'suptam' means – feign sleep.

Since both these words are attached with negatives 'na', their meanings turn into negatives too i.e. the reverse of what is presented above. Therefore, at the locutionary level the utterance is—'neither awake nor asleep' but the illocution is a state of hanging in-between smiles and tears, delight and grief, recognition and dejection, enlightenment and obscurity, appreciation and admonishment. These words splendidly state their illocutionary value by describing the predicament of the Yakṣa's beloved wife. They reflect her state marvelously and spectacularly.

Besides, another word 'amṛta' also resonates. Though each word has its resonance and suggestion which is the hallmark of Kalidāsa's poetry yet this word works like a magnet to gather many thoughts and reflections providing us a chance to have an insight into the poet's vision:



Firstly, the black clouds hold water-vapours. They shower it in the form of rain which works like *amṛta* (nectar) for the flora and fauna. Everything in Nature regenerates refreshes and is invigorated. Therefore, such clouds bring cheerfulness and joy in the rainy season as well as fertilization and growth. They are the messengers of Romance too. Not only humans but animals also are filled with passion and admixed emotions. This is what happens with Yakṣa too. He is separated from his dear wife. He is facing the pangs of ‘*viyoga*’ (separation). This separation has filled him with intense emotions and these emotions have become so powerful that he forgets the difference between the animate and the inanimate. He becomes one with Nature and calls the cloud his brother. The Śloka-5 of *Pūrvamegha* speaks of this state as: “*kāmārtā hi prakṛtikṛāpanaśetanācetanēṣu*”. The Yakṣa also upholds the cloud as being of divine origin.

Secondly, the sky is overcast with this kind of black clouds. Had these clouds been white, i.e., without water-vapours (*Salila*), the sunlight would have reached the earth but because they are black clouds filled with water, the sunlight cannot reach the earth. This affects the land-lotus plant because to blossom and be blown, it requires sunlight which is absent since the black clouds have shrouded the sky; likewise it cannot close itself because it is day-time.

Thirdly, just as there is the alternate rise and fall of the surface of oceans, seas, rivers etc. caused by of the moon and sun, similar is the feelings within the heart of the Yakṣiṇī since her eye anxiously goes towards the moon-rays owing to previous delight but returns back as quickly because now they are the cause of her agony. Besides, the eye-lashes of the Yakṣiṇī are heavy with ‘*Salila*’ i.e. tears. These tears do not let her eyes close and she cannot open them completely lest they may fall; equally the moon-beams would hurt the eyes since she is in the state of separation too.

The suggestion is that water and the sun are a life-source. Now the land-lotus is an aquatic plant which requires water as well as the sunlight as its life source. Kālidāsa has used the word ‘*sthala*’ with lotus which suggests that this life source is missing or to be more precise, it is at least not in an adequate amount. Now, this specific land-lotus plant is given comparison with Yakṣiṇī thereby suggesting that she is away from her husband—the Yakṣa and this has brought catastrophic results. Since her dear husband is virtually not present, she has to feed herself on his memories and these memories are just adequate to keep her alive.

Further, the land-lotus plant is deprived of the sun-rays which again is a life source. As a result, the lotus cannot fully blossom. Similarly, the presence and the love of Yakṣa is like the sunlight which is required by the Yakṣiṇī to regain her state, youth and beauty. The essence of her life—her husband—is missing. This again has made her survival very difficult and causing her affliction.

Both these points are again suggestive of the sixth stage out of the total ten stages of ‘*Kāma*’ (sensuality) whereby nothing interests the subject whether it is good food, entertainment or even self-grooming etc. In this stage everything seems insipid and waste.

## Conclusion

Kālidāsa has presented a very apt simile. The first two foots describe ‘*prabuddha*’ (awakened) state of the Yakṣiṇī and the next two foots describe the ‘*supt*’ (asleep) state. Though ‘*na prabuddhām na suptām*’ is a contrastive (*virodhātmaka*) statement yet both the words are complementary to each other; in other words, being inconsistently consistent and interrelated. This speaks of and illustrates Yakṣiṇī’s predicament.

The dexterity, insight and genius of Kālidāsa is also manifested in his choice of words for he was cognizant of the suggestive, emotive and cognitive power of words especially in the citation of the word ‘*kamalinī*’ for introducing the comparison of Yakṣiṇī. The Yakṣiṇī is a *Padmini Strī* and no other flower could describe her as Padmini than the lotus (*kamalinī*). His grammatical skill is visible in his use of the qualifier ‘*sthala*’ making the word—‘*sthala kamalinī*’ because he wanted to make the comparison look alike as the Yakṣiṇī was lying on the floor. The *kamalinī* is virtually away from water and sunlight just as the Yakṣiṇī is away from her husband – the Yakṣa, and his love.

Hence, decoding the metaphoric structure of this simile not only brings to light Kālidāsa’s pictorial quality, creative gift and vision but also illustrates how the metaphoric structures unfold themselves step by step. How words used accrue the picturesque and become semantically loaded. The skill to tap the right word and dexterity to naturally weave metaphoricity into the matrix of the text is what makes Kālidāsa a great poet (*Mahākavi*).

## Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> Echoes of the same idea in at a more deeper and kaleidoscopic level can also be noticed in Patañjali’s:

*ābdabrāhmaṇi nisnataḥ parabrahmādhigacchati* —*Mahā-Bhāṣya*, Ūnti Parva.

<sup>2</sup> *Adhanoddharane tāvad yāvad dolayate manaḥ/*

*padasya sthāpita sthairyē hant siddha sarasvatī /*

*yat padāni jyaṇtyeva pariṛttisahiṣṇutam /*

*tām ābdānyasanisnataḥ ābdapākam pracakṣate /* —*Kāvyālaṅkārasūtravṛtti* 1.3.15 Comm.

<sup>3</sup> *Gato’stamarko bhatinduryanti vasaya pakṣinak /*

*Ityeṇamadi kim kāvyam vartamenam pracakṣate / //*

—*Kāvyālaṅkāra* II/92.

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## Essentialising the Jagannath Cult: A Discourse on Self and Other

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Perhaps, of all the images and motifs of 'the Orient' that have engaged the attention of Western observers and scholars, the most enduring is India's religion(s). The West's distinct style of thought, ideas and perceptions of the Orient, collectively placed within the rubric of 'Orientalism' is based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'<sup>1</sup> No doubt, this perceived distinction has informed the West's mind to construe and construct Indian religious traditions. The 'knowledge about distinction' coupled with a colonial sense of superiority, has prompted the West's knowledge about the Orient to be essentialist, thus giving rise to a binary opposition of 'self' and 'other', i.e., European self-image and Indian 'otherness'.

This article seeks to demonstrate how the Jagannath Cult, the most revered and presiding Hindu religious institution of Oriyas has been imputed with essentialisations by the Orientalist discourse, and how this has been an exercise in colonial hegemony over the subjected 'other' Oriyas. But I must admit here that owing to less importance attached to Orissa, and the consequential marginalisation of this part of India in the British colonial considerations, the writings about the Jagannath cult by Western scholars and observers were limited. Moreover, the majority of whatsoever written, were by Christian theologians, i.e., missionaries, thereby bringing with them ideals and ideas of Christianity to their intellectual exercise.

In order to understand the Orientalist discourse on the Jagannath cult by the missionaries, it is pertinent first to define two perspectives, which they adopted while engaging themselves with the Jagannath cult. First is their Judaeo-Christian presuppositions with which they grew up, and second is their general understanding of Hinduism. But both were interrelated, in the sense the former determined the missionaries' formulation of the ontology of Hinduism. As we have been shown, the term 'Hinduism' is a Western explanatory construct, and as such it reflects the colonial and Judaeo-Christian presuppositions of the Western Orientalists who first coined the term.<sup>2</sup> No doubt, a normative paradigm was employed to construct 'Hinduism', and that included textuality, monotheism, salvation etc.—the hallmarks of Christianity. But this prevented the Orientalist discourse from appreciating and engaging with the heterogeneity of Indian religious traditions. A homogenized Hinduism was born, and came to be loaded with simplistic, essentialist judgments. Consequently, India's regional religious traditions

like the Jagannath cult were ignored, and even bullied. But when the West came in direct contact with such a tradition like the Jagannath cult, the discourse that developed around it, became antagonistic and highly prejudicial, based on the European superiority.

In the case of the Jagannath cult, the context became rather complicated, as it was initially an issue in the colonial power struggle, and due to subsequent missionary involvement in both the cult affairs and power struggle. As soon as the British occupied the main land Orissa in 1803 they realized the importance of the Jagannath cult for Orissa and Oriyas, and hence tried to control it for their better access and acceptability. In that, the declared policy of the 'Cornwallis Code' (1793 A.D.) to protect the Indian subjects 'in the free exercise of their religion'—which served as a 'compact' between the Company Government and its Indian subjects—helped the British to achieve their goal.<sup>3</sup> Under the pretext of the 'compact', the British took the administration of the Puri temple<sup>4</sup> to their hands, protected the rights of the temple priests and other servitors, and streamlined the collection of the pilgrim tax. But the Christian missionaries, both in India and England opposed the British involvement in the temple, thereby forcing the British to gradually withdraw from the temple affairs. Of course, the withdrawal was also dictated by the realisation on the part of the Christian government of their inability to manage the details of a Hindu temple. Yet, given the 'compact' of the Cornwallis code, the British did not completely disengage themselves from the Puri temple, but continued with a supervisory role that finally transformed to active interference in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This manifested itself in their struggle against the Gajapati kings of Puri over the authority of the Puri temple. Though the struggle was finally decided in favour of the Kings of Puri,<sup>5</sup> the Christian missionaries had already played their role in this struggle by way of their debate and discourse over the Jagannath cult. We will see in the succeeding pages how under these circumstances, the missionaries developed essentialist stereotypes on the Jagannath cult.

## II

The presiding deity of the Jagannath cult is Jagannath, the eponym of the cult. The cult has been accepted as a regional tradition of Vaishnavism in which Jagannath has been variously identified with Vaishnavite godheads like Vishnu and Krshna. The close relationship between Orissa/Oriyas and the Jagannath cult can be gauged from the fact that in popular parlance, Oriyas' religion is known as 'Jagannath Dharma' and the Oriya culture as 'Jagannath Samskriti'. In other words, the cult came to impart religious and cultural identity on Oriyas, and enforced unity in the Oriya-speaking region during the British period. Although there is contestation to a Jagannath-centric Oriya identity from sub-regional movements like the Mahima Dharma, it can be historically and logically shown how the contestants themselves had been either co-opted to or absorbed into the overarching Jagannath cult.<sup>6</sup>

The very fact that the Jagannath cult occupies a pivotal place in the religio-cultural life of Orissa, drew the attention of Westerners whenever they happened to visit this part of the country, particularly the town Puri, the hallowed seat of the cult. Long before the Christian missionaries made their forays to Orissa, some other Westerners had already come in contact with the Jagannath cult, and the Puri temple in

particular. Many of the stereotypes about the cult and the Puri temple can be traced back to these Western observers, the earliest foreigners to visit this part of the country. One of the foremost annual events of the Puri temple that drew immediate attention of the visiting Westerners was the Car festival or Rath Yatra, an annual ritualistic event. Given its magnitude and elaboration, the Car festival could at once strike dismay and confusion in their mind as they were exposed to a totally new situation marked by revelry and ecstasy. The little known Franciscan monk from the Northern Italy, Friar Odoric who traveled India during 1316-18, wrote in 1321 about the Car festival and the death of pilgrims under the car wheels. According to Friar, the pilgrims flung themselves before the rolling chariots so that they died for their gods. 'The car passes over them and crunches them, and cuts them in sunder and so they perish on the spot.'<sup>7</sup> Friar Odoric visited almost the whole of modern Asia, and his personal narrative contains fascinating details of the geography and culture of the places and peoples he visited.<sup>8</sup> No doubt, his narrative is one of the earliest testimonies to the West's prejudices and disdainful superiority over the East. At the beginning of his narrative, Odoric declares that he visited the countries of the 'unbelievers', thereby asserting the superiority of the Christian West over the East. According to Franco Mormando, Odoric, like his contemporaries believed that non-Christians were all 'idol worshippers' whose ontological status as human beings was decidedly less than Christians and whose eternal salvation was strongly to be doubted.<sup>9</sup> All this explains as to why Odoric opined so categorically, but mistakenly about deaths occurring during the time of the Car festival. Without going into the real causes of such deaths, he construed it as an essential feature of the idolatry and general religious practice of 'lesser mortals.'

Before the British occupation of Orissa in 1803 and after Odoric's visit to this part of the country in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, we have two more English travelers, William Bruton and Thomas Bowrey whose narratives set the tune for later Christian missionaries to essentialise some important institutions of the cult, namely the Car festival and the Puri temple. William Bruton, a famous seaman of his time, is the first Englishman to give an account of the Puri temple after his visit to the town of Puri in November, 1633. In his travelogue, *News from the East Indies*, otherwise called *A Voyage to Bengalla*, he describes the idols of the Jagannath Triad as 'a great serpent with seven heads', and according to him, 'on the cheeks of each head, it has the form of a wing which opens, shuts and flaps, as it is carried in a stately chariot'.<sup>10</sup> Bruton's observation is the result of his ignorance about the Jagannath iconography and prejudicial mindset against its theology. It is more blatantly reflected in his observation on the Car festival when he says that during the festival many people offer themselves a sacrifice to the Chariot, and by this means, 'they think to merit Heaven.'<sup>11</sup>

But when Bruton speaks of the Puri temple, his ignorance is coupled with a flippant attitude towards the Jagannath cult as a whole. According to him, the temple is the mirror of all wickedness and idolatry, and 'the home of Satan' which belongs to 9000 Brahmins or Priests.<sup>12</sup> The temple, being a Hindu religious institution was restricted only to Hindus, and hence non-Hindu Westerners had no opportunity to look at the idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra except during the Car festival when the holy Triad are brought out of the temple premises. This disadvantage must have severely

limited Bruton's understanding of the iconography of the holy Triad, but at the same time such a distortion of the temple, the hallowed sea of the Triad, was no doubt prompted by a judgmental attitude of a self-professed 'superior race and religion' to which he belonged to.

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, an English sailing-master, named Thomas Bowrey visited this part of the Bay of Bengal, which he called 'Orixa'. In his travelogue, while portraying Oriyas as 'poor, idolatrous and low-spirited' people, he characterizes the Puri temple, its priests and the Car festival as 'diabolic'.<sup>13</sup> It is but natural that his such low estimation of Oriyas and their religion resulted not only from his ignorance but also from a general Christian disdainful attitude towards the religion of 'East', and particularly idolatry. Even, as we know, the Ten Commandments prohibit idolatry.

Like Bruton before him, Bowrey also misjudged the Car festival. Writing in old English, he construes death under the wheels as deliberate, suicidal. 'And which is both stranger and more incredible, many of them (crowd) come to a great many miles to end their days here, under the wheels of this ponderous, but accompited by them, holy arke. It is a noble, heroic and jealous death.'<sup>14</sup>

It may be noted here that both Bruton and Bowrey have seen the institution of Jagannath, from the perspective of a traveler to a new, far-off, but exotic land. Devoid of any understanding of the Jagannath theology, they tried to essentialise various aspects of the Jagannath cult on the basis of their prejudicial Christian mindset and racial arrogance. So not only the Car festival was construed as evil and diabolic but also the images, sanctum sanctorum of the Puri temple, serving priests etc. were cast in a negative mould. This way of looking at the institution of Jagannath continued with the Christian missionaries.

The earliest Reverend to visit Puri (1806) after the British annexation of the coastal Orissa in 1803 was Claudius Buchanan, a chaplain from Calcutta (1806). He was vehemently opposed to the institutions of Jagannath as evidenced in his virulent attack on Jagannath, His temple and the Car festival. He describes the Jagannath idol as 'the monster holding high carnival', and the Puri temple as 'a stately pagoda—a hideous grotesque thing, of huge proportions, in the semblance of mutilated humanity stuck about with pseudo-divine emblems...'<sup>15</sup> Equally vociferous in his condemnation of the Car festival, he writes that pilgrims overcome obstacles like harsh climate, want and horrible diseases, in order to kill themselves under the wheels of the Car in a sort of ecstatic mockery of martyrdom.<sup>16</sup> In a religions tract, *Christian Researches in Asia*, he laments, 'a record of Juggernaut would be a roll written within and without with blood, obscenity and woe.'<sup>17</sup> For Buchanan, the Hindu idolatry was responsible for such human disaster, but this is no doubt, a theological misconception on his part even though he himself visited Puri in 1806 during the Car festival. Witnessing the dead and dying among pilgrims during the festival and other consequences of the pilgrimage, he even compares the institution of Jagannath with Moloch, the deity of the Hell who is propitiated by the sacrificial burning of children.

In reality, Buchanan's account created a stir among Christians in England, and its horrific description aroused their conscience to start a Mission in Orissa. Accordingly,

the first Protestant General Baptist Missionary Society was formed in 1816. Buchanan's account is also very important in setting the tone for future missionaries to look at the institution of Jagannath from a set perspective. In other words, Orientalist stereotypes on this great institution started evolving with Buchanan's account as subsequent commentators on Jagannath followed his suit.

Earlier, I have shown how the missionaries carried with them their Christian ideas and paradigms on the basis of which they tried to weigh the institution of Jagannath. Their main plank of an oppositional discourse was idolatry. And those who visited Puri considered Jagannath as the stronghold of idolatry. That is why, during the early years of the British rule when the Company Government became involved in the affairs of the Jagannath cult by way of imposing the pilgrim tax and providing support to the Puri temple, the missionaries reprimanded the government for encouraging idolatry. A missionary, by the name W.F.B. Laurie observed that 'it was inconsistent to give money for the expenses attendant upon idolatry (Jagannath) while the efforts were made for the promulgation of educations and Christianity among people'.<sup>18</sup> Laurie made it clear that Western education and Christianity were superior to the 'East' and did not sanction idolatry.

For W.F.B. Laurie, Orissa was an ignoble and abominable place, and his disdainful attitude towards Orissa is reflected in the title of his account itself. 'Orissa may be compared to a huge cauldron which has been boiling for many hundred years, into which ignorance, stupidity and bigotry have cast so many poisonous ingredients that, it is difficult to say when the contents will become purified and good.'<sup>19</sup> He holds Jagannath as the inspiring soul of all, thus fixing responsibility on the State deity of Oriyas for their own misery. 'Jagannath is the principal stronghold of Hindu superstitions.'<sup>20</sup>

The Car festival came under the scathing attack of Laurie, and evoked similar reactions as that from Buchanan, Bruton and Bowrey. According to Laurie, 'the entire scene of the Rath Jatra Savours, to an incredible extent, of the ludicrous, the barbarous and the awful', and after the festival is over, 'many of the delighted pilgrims either retire or die, or reach their deserted homes, the victims of ignorance, poverty and wretchedness.'<sup>21</sup> He concludes that 'the whole history of Jagannath from nearly beginning of the 19th century is neither more or less than one huge calendar of crime'.<sup>22</sup> But the truth behind such comment lies in his attempt to assign Christianity to a high pedestal vis-à-vis the Jagannath cult when he himself witnessed the Car festival. Emotionally swayed, Laurie observes that 'in the face of the Car festival, Christianity shuddered, morality in it wept, the god of mirth slunk away trembling and finally interact slumbered in silence awaiting the down of a better day'.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the Car festival, the biggest ritualistic religious event of Oriyas, was a wretched, horrifying barbarous affair! Thus, like his predecessors, the Car festival has been the main plank of attack by Laurie on the Jagannath cult without any understanding of the theology of Jagannath or religious significance of the festival. At the same time, we cannot miss the sight of the hidden agenda of the missionaries, i.e., propagation of Christianity by downgrading and condemning Hindu religious institutions and Laurie himself was of course, a missionary.

Like Laurie who reprimanded the East India Company for promoting the Jagannath cult, another missionary, by the name William Kaye, challenged the government role in the affairs of the Puri temple. Kaye dubbed the government as 'Jagannath's Churchwarden,' and blamed it for 'openly and authoritatively aiding and abetting the worst forms of devil worship' and 'taking all the hideous indecencies and cruelties of Hinduism under their especial patronage.'<sup>24</sup> While insisting on the severance of all sorts of links with the institution of Jagannath, he denigrated it for having devil worship, indecencies and cruelties. In other words, the Jagannath cult again came to be construed as barbaric and uncivilized, much inferior to Christianity! Kaye thus followed the suit of his predecessors in his observation and estimation of Jagannath.

The professed aim of those missionaries who came to Orissa was the evangelization, so it was natural for them to pick up those features or issues of the most popular religious cult of the local people (i.e., Jagannath cult) that appeared to them or to their Christian scruples, anathematic, incompatible and illogical. Then, these were construed and interpreted as barbaric and inhuman, whereas Christianity was projected as a 'great, rational, civilized religion'! Development of such a discourse assigned the Jagannath cult to a lowly position, which gave rise to certain negative stereotypes about the cult and its various aspects. One such stereotype that was constantly harped on by the missionaries was the idolatry of the cult.

The first missionaries, deputed by the General Baptist Missionary Society to come to Orissa were James Peggs and William Bampton who arrived in Orissa in 1822, and who were familiar with Buchanan's account of the Jagannath cult. Already schooled in the conventional, tainted wisdom of his predecessors about the cult and influenced particularly by Buchanan's observation, Peggs found the popularity of Lord Jagannath as the stumbling block in the evangelization drive. So he also started attacking and denigrating the institution of Jagannath, and the main plank of his attack was naturally idolatry. But the institution of Jagannath was supported by the Company government by way of maintaining the pilgrim tax and protecting the temple. So Peggs' first victim of condemnation was the government itself, and according to him the pilgrim tax enhanced the supposed value of pilgrimage, and hence the fame of such idolatrous resorts like Puri.<sup>25</sup> He saw the consequences of the pilgrimage to Puri in terms of sickness, mortality and brutality. So he castigated the Company government for promoting pilgrimage by way of being associated with the Jagannath cult. Peggs considers the pilgrims to Puri as 'a painted pagan, semi-barbarous race', and for Britain to be associated with these idolaters in their 'scenes of revelry, vice and misery was degrading to the British national character.'<sup>26</sup>

Peggs, Kaye, Laurie, and other missionaries who came in contact with the institution of Jagannath supposedly claimed to represent Christian morality and theological ideas. It may be stated here that in Europe, simple lay Christianity of revivalist congregations of the time demanded a missionary to denounce all 'pagan idolatry'. But the philosophy of Enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> century had spread the idea of acknowledging the plurality of higher religions among the educated in Europe. In this, some non-Christian higher religions were recognized, thereby advocating for religious tolerance

and a comparative study of religions. But in case of Hinduism, the Christian missionaries had rather a hostile attitude towards it, concentrating mostly on idolatry. This was reflected in their treatment of the Jagannath cult that was construed with an air of racial superiority and chastisement. Their anti-Jagannath perspective led to the development of Orientalist stereotypes on the cult, which were reiterated and strengthened by historiographical writings of some British scholars of the time.

### III

The two earliest English scholars to refer to the Jagannath cult in their historical works on India are Beveridge and Hamilton. But they also picked up some visible popular aspects of the cult like the pilgrimage and Car festival, and projected them in a negative mould. Take for example Beveridge writing in 1814 in *Asiatic Journal* about the Car festival. He describes how the people killed themselves under the wheels of the Cars, and for him the sight was so horrible that it 'beggared all description'.<sup>27</sup> Hamilton gives a horrifying account of the pilgrimage to the Jagannath temple. According to him, 'the concourse of pilgrims to this temple is so immense, that at 50 miles distance its approach may be known by the quantity of human bones which are strewed by the way.'<sup>28</sup> He added that many perished by dysentery, and the surrounding country abounded with skulls and human bones.<sup>29</sup> Both the historians held Jagannath responsible for such mass death during the pilgrimage and Car festival. Like the missionaries, these early historians had also misunderstanding of the nature and extent of the death. It was further aggravated by their colonial mentality of looking at anything belonging to their subjects as 'hostile, inferior and loathsome.'

Even a historian like Andrew Stirling who is known as a scholar-administrator of the British India, admits the existence of excess fanaticism, which once used to prompt pilgrims to court death by throwing themselves under the wheels of the Car of Jagannath. But, writing in 1818 he opines that the same fanaticism 'has happily long ceased to actuate the worshippers of the present day to kill themselves.'<sup>30</sup> Although Stirling thinks the missionaries' estimate of the number of deaths during the Car festival an exaggeration, he still testifies the occurrence of death, due to variety of reasons including fanaticism, inclement weather etc. Like the missionaries, he also considers the Puri temple as the mirror of all wickedness and idolatry. Thus, Stirling falls in line with the missionaries in his treatment of the Jagannath cult. But his treatment of Jagannath mostly follows from his general impression of Orissa and Oriyas. Taking clue from Abul Fazal, the great scholar in the *darbar* of the Mughal emperor, Akbar (1556–1605), Stirling considers Oriyas as effeminate, devoid of manly spirit, ignorant and stupid, and Orissa as 'Boeotia' of India because of the intellectual dullness of Oriyas.<sup>31</sup> He even goes to the extent of asserting dissolute manners of Oriyas on the basis of 'the obscene characters and impure symbols of the demoralizing religion which they profess'.<sup>32</sup> In other words, he relates the Oriya character to the Oriyas' religion, that is the Jagannath cult, which is a 'demoralizing religion.' This sort of inference is not only illogical but also highly irrational and prejudicial.

W.W.Hunter, one of the earliest British to write a detailed history of Orissa in two volumes, has devoted substantially to the Jagannath cult. In the first volume, there



are two chapters ‘Jagannath’ and ‘The Pilgrims of Jagannath’ where he has extensively dwelt on the origin, rites, temple and pilgrimage of Jagannath, and His association with Orissa and Oriyas. Although Hunter is sensitive, even sympathetic to Oriya’s yearning for Jagannath as the ‘outcome of centuries of companionship in suffering between the people and their god’, he cannot escape his Christian and colonial mindset that dictates his perceptions of Jagannath, the pilgrimage and Car festival. Like his predecessors, he also essentialises the institution of pilgrimage in the Jagannath cult by way of construing its negative aspects as its essence. For him, diseases and death mark the pilgrimage. He is afraid that the over-crowded, pest-hunted dens (lodges) around the Puri temple may become at any moment the center from which disease radiates to the great manufacturing towns of France and England.<sup>33</sup> He is so obsessed with the anti-pilgrimage and anti-idolatry feelings that he goes to the extent of making such illogical comment that ‘the squalid pilgrim army of Jagannath with its rags and hair and skin freighted with vermin and impregnated with infection, may any year slay thousands of the most talented and the most beautiful of our age in Vienna, London or Washington.’<sup>34</sup> Perhaps, Hunter was not aware of the topography of the places he was talking of! How infection could travel without any proper mode of transportation, thousands of miles from one end of the globe to the other end to haunt ‘the most talented and the most beautiful!’

#### IV

In the writings and observations of the missionaries, historians and scholar-administrators, one can thus notice biased criticism, falsified allegations and irrational arguments against the Jagannath cult. Starting from the iconography of the Jagannath Triad to the Car festival, all came under their scathing attack. Jagannath was constructed as ‘diabolic’ and held as the springboard of idolatry and all corrupt practices. Perhaps, that is why gradually Jagannath came to be described in scurrilous, flippant manner. Even the distorted form of His name, ‘Juggernaut’ came to be used as a metaphor for any relentless force or object of devotion and sacrifice. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, the US President Roosevelt used the term ‘Juggernaut’ to explain how the ordnance was being manufactured relentlessly in his country.<sup>35</sup> This sort of metaphoric use of ‘Jagannath’ for mundane object to show its force and dashing nature, definitely denounces the sanctity, religious significance and respect Jagannath enjoys among Hindus, and Oriyas, in particular. But one can hardly fail to notice how this metaphor derives its meaning from the Car or Rath that Jagannath boards during the famous Car festival.

The West’s stereotypes about the Jagannath cult that persisted for long and influenced the development of a discourse on the cult resulted from a number of interconnected factors. These, we have already discussed in the preceding pages. But the West’s ignorance and theological misunderstanding of the Jagannath cult, the evangelization spirit, and above all its hegemonic attitude towards the ‘other’ Orient also contributed to its ‘civilizing mission’—altering, restructuring and conquering the Indian society and culture. This is also attested by so many Christian chapbooks published in Oriya during the period. There is direct attack and denigration of Jagannath, and praise for Jesus Christ and Christianity in these books. In many of the Christian tracts, Jagannath is compared and contrasted with Jesus Christ, tenets of Hinduism are

ridiculed and different aspects of the Jagannath cult construed as evil, uncivilized and superstitious. Take for example, a small tract, *Christashcharyakriya* or Miracle of Christ by an unknown author, in which miracles of Jesus are described, and finally he is declared as the true and only saviour.<sup>36</sup> Yet, in another tract, *Jagannath Tirtha Mahatmya* or Glory of Jagannath Pilgrimage Centre, the sufferings and miseries of pilgrims to Puri are overplayed.<sup>37</sup> Even some convert Christians also produced tract literature, propagating Christianity and imputing falsehood, hypocrisy, unholiness and impurity to Jagannath.

The production of such tract literature in simple vernacular aimed at reorienting the knowledge about the Jagannath cult that was at public domain. Needless to mention that it helped in the evangelization drive of the missionaries among Oriyas.

According to Richard King, there are two forms of Orientalist discourse, the first generally antagonistic and confident in European superiority, the second, generally affirmative, enthusiastic and suggestive of Indian superiority in certain key areas.<sup>38</sup> What we have seen from the foregoing discussion is the evolution of the first form of discourse, which resulted out of a host of factors. But as already hinted at the outset of the article, due to historical reasons there were not much writings nor attention paid on Orissa or the Jagannath cult. Perhaps, that is why the Orientalist stereotypes that evolved on the Jagannath cult could not have much currency. Nor the West wrote much on Jagannath. Of course, since the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a typical Oriya (nationalist?) perspective developed on Jagannath that contested the Orientalist essentialisations. Jagannath and His cult came to be construed and constructed not only within the nationalist paradigms but also sometimes in highly exaggerated and sentimental way.<sup>39</sup> For example, as opposed to the Western missionaries’ and historians’ construction of Jagannath as stronghold of superstitions and evils, an Oriya historian, Krupasindhu Mishra describes Jagannath as the ‘Sparshamani’ or touchstone in the history of Orissa. Lord Jagannath transformed Utkal (Orissa), the land of the down-trodden (*patita*), the *Bratyabhumi*, to a great religious and holy land.<sup>40</sup> For Mishra, Jagannath spreads equality and fraternity and epitomizes all the essence and glory of Hinduism.<sup>41</sup> Another nationalist Oriya, Nilakantha Das considers Jagannath as the symbol of friendship (*maitree*), which is required for salvation (*nirvana*).<sup>42</sup> Jagannath promotes *nirvana* for all by way of propagating universal brotherhood or *maitree*. However little justified or supported by facts such claims may be, these ultimately helped in countering and checking Western stereotypes about Jagannath and the cult.

#### Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London, Penguin Book, 1995), p.2

<sup>2</sup> Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion* (New Delhi, OUP, 1999), p.100

<sup>3</sup> N.G.Cassels, *Religion and Pilgrim Tax under the Company Raj* (New Delhi, 1987), p.ix

<sup>4</sup> The main temple of the Jagannath cult is situated in the town of Puri. It houses the Jagannath Triad—Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra.

<sup>5</sup> See, Subhakanta Behera, *Construction of an Identity Discourse. Oriya Literature and the Jagannath cult, 1866-1936* (New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2002) for a detailed discussion.

<sup>6</sup> See Subhakanta Behera, op.cit., chapter 6

- <sup>7</sup> Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson. An Anglo-Indian Dictionary* (New edn., Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Ed. Ltd., 1996), p.466
- <sup>8</sup> See, *The Travels of Friar Odoric*, transl., Henry Yule (William B. Endmans, 2001)
- <sup>9</sup> Franco Mormando, 'A Friar's Journey to the East', *The National Catholic Weekly*, Vol.186, No.16, May 13, 2002
- <sup>10</sup> P.N.Nair (ed.), Bruton's visit to Lord Jagannath 350 years Ago (Calcutta, 1985), p.68
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.70
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.68
- <sup>13</sup> R.C.Temple (ed.), *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679* (Cambridge, 1903), pps.12-18
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.18
- <sup>15</sup> J.W.Kaye, *Christianity in India: An Historical Narrative* (London, 1859), p.369
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.370
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.3
- <sup>18</sup> W.F.B.Laurie, *Orissa: The Garden of Superstition and Idolatry* (London, 1848), p.101
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.18
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.47
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.47
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.51
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Subhakanta Behera, op.cit., p.204
- <sup>25</sup> James Peggs, *India's Cries to British Humanity* (London, 1832), p.120
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson* (Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Ref., reprt., 1996), p.467
- <sup>28</sup> W.Hamilton, *The Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindostan and Adjacent* (1820), vol. I, in *Sri Mandir* (Puri), vol.XXIV, Oct.,1994, p.5
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.5
- <sup>30</sup> Andrew Stirling, *Orissa: Its Geography, Statistics, History, Religion and Antiquities* (London, 1846) p.127
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp.47-48
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> W.W.Hunter, *Orissa* (London, 1872), I, p.166
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.167
- <sup>35</sup> S.N.Das, *Jagannatha Mandira o' Jagannatha Tattwa* (4<sup>th</sup> edn., Cuttack, Friends Publisher, 1985), p.28 (in Oriya)
- <sup>36</sup> See, *Christashcharyakriya* (6<sup>th</sup> edn., Cuttack, 1898)
- <sup>37</sup> P.K.Patra, *Odisare Baptist Misanari Sosaitira Karya abam Christa Mandali Sthapanara Itihasa, 1822-1942* (Cuttack, 1943), p.178 (in Oriya)
- <sup>38</sup> Richard King, op.cit., p.116
- <sup>39</sup> See, for example, Jagabandhu Singh, *Prachina Utkala* (3rd edn., Bhubaneswar, Orissa Sahitya Akademi, 1982), and Nilakantha Das, *Odia Sahitya Krama Parinama* (2 volumes, Cuttack, 1948). Both are in Oriya.
- <sup>40</sup> Krupasindh Mishra, *Utkal Itihasa* (New edn., Books and Books, Cuttack, 1979), pp.38-39 (in Oriya)
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
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## **The Art of *Amour-cortois*: *Eros, Jois* and *Mahāsukha* in Tantra and the Troubadours**

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The troubadour concept of *amour-cortois* has been an unending source of inspiration to the entire gamut of European poetry, and none can set aside the decided influence it exerted on a galaxy of poets—the French Trouvers, the German Minnesingers, the Italian poets of the sweet 'New Style' (*dolce still nuove*) and finally the English poets like Chaucer, Gower, Spenser, Shakespear, the Metaphysicals, John Keats, Robert Browning, the Rossettis and the famous modern-poet-critic Ezra Pound. While highlighting the psychological and esoteric implications of the troubadour poetry, Pound also made a perceptive enumeration of the modernist relevance of the provençal poetic tradition. Pound's appreciation of Medievalism and the troubadour tradition goes as follows:

Any study of European poetry is unsound if it does not commence with a study of that art in provence.... It is true that each century after the Renaissance has tried in its own way to come nearer the classic, but if we are to understand that part of civilization which is the art of verse, we must begin at the root, and that root is medieval (Pound, 1954:101-102).

Having said this, Pound was perhaps the first American critic to emphasize the wonderful word-music as well as the troubadourian 'trobar clus' style and code language which the prominent provençal poets like Arnaut Daniel, Guillamu IX of Aquitaine, Vidal, Jaufre Rudel and Marcabru had introduced. At the same time, Pound's observation that the troubadour lyrics are perhaps a little oriental in feeling, and (that) it is likely that the spirit of Sufism is not wholly absent from their content<sup>1</sup> has prompted many scholars to search for oriental connection with Troubadour poetry and erotic-mysticism. These scholars, of whom mention may be made of Denis de Rougemont and O.V. Garrison, assertively maintain that the troubadour esoteric-erotic rituals of romance entailing an elaborate paraphernalia of courtship 'were unquestionably tantric in origin.'<sup>2</sup> Pound and Pe'lladan locate a cult of worship of the 'universe of fluid force' that operates through the divine female energy epitomized by the courtely *domna*. It is here that the troubadour erotic-mysticism comes closer to the worship of divine energy (*Śakti*) in

Indian Tantricism and Sahajiyā Philosophy in which the Primordial Energy (*Mahāśakti*) is acclaimed as all-powerful and pervasive. The Tantric Śādhakas and Sahajiyās visualize the whole universe in form of what Pound calls ‘the universe of fluid force.’

Against the aforesaid background, the present paper is designed to search for oriental connection behind the troubadour erotic-esoteric tradition by way of juxtaposing the troubadoursian concepts of eros-amor-jois with kāma-prema-mahāsukha of the Tantric-Sahajiyā tradition on the basis of the philosophical explanation of Troubadoursian dualism and Indian philosophical progression from dualism to monism.

## I

The troubadours were a group of provençal as well as Italian court poets of the high Middle Ages (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c. A.D) who, under the patronage of several courts of Southern France and Italy,<sup>3</sup> composed love-lyrics (*canso*) songs of seduction (*pastorela*), debate on the code of love (*tenso*), love song of the dawn (*alba*) and political satire (*sirventes*). But, they were primarily poets of love, and the special theme of their love-lyrics is refinement and idealization of sensual love variously known as ‘fin’amor’, ‘cortz-amor’ and ‘amour-courtois—a term that was coined and rather loosely translated as ‘courtly love’—by Gaston Paris in 1883.<sup>4</sup> And since then prominent critics of troubadour poetry like A.J.Denomy, C.S. Lewis, L.T. Topsfield, R.S.Briffault, R. Boase, H.J.Chaytor and Peter Makin have unanimously acknowledged the significance of the term and thus courtly love has been accepted as idealization of passion in terms of ‘refined sensuality’ and deification of the cruel and capricious beloved-mistress (*domna/donna*) by the suppliant courtly lover.

Though scholars have laboriously gone for different sources regarding the origin of courtly love, its immediate and reliable root is located in the aristocratic/feudalistic and chivalric ethos of the high Middle Ages that inevitably reminds one of the medieval knight-hood, feudal social structure and castle civilisation. Feudalism as such entails a hierarchical pattern in which the king is placed at the top of the order, whereas the dignified knights are placed next to him. The warrior knights are allowed the third place, whereas the common men occupy the lowest rung of the ladder. Feudalism facilitated the creation of a professional military class consisting of warrior knights who not only came to the rescue of the medieval castle and the common men from frequent foreign invasion, but also served the king (Lord) with fidelity, humility and sacrifice as his ‘vassal’. The lord-vassal relationship in feudalism facilitated the romance between the loyal knight and the lady of the castle and Tristan, Lancelot, Sir Gawaine and Perceval epitomize knighthood in perfection by virtue of their humility, courtesy (*cortezia*), nobility and service to win the heart of the lady of the castle.<sup>5</sup> In this connection, Maurice Valency observes:

Service was the keynote of the knightly order. The knight was dedicated to the service of his lord, his country, his king, his faith, his church and in time, his lady, he was not especially encouraged to serve himself... he was, ideally self-dedicated to a life of glorious poverty; and this ideal the courtly literature everywhere advanced. (Valency, 1958: 43)

Courtship is, as it were, the birth right of the knight and for that matter, of the courtly lover. The knight Perceval is advised by his mother not to abandon courtship:

If thou see a fair woman, pay thy court to her, whether she will or not;  
for thus thou wilt make thyself a better and more esteemed man.  
(Briffault, 1959: 413)

The medieval castle culture was at once conducive to the rise of courtship and furtive adulterous passion. In this connection, the condition of medieval women and the concept of marriage in the feudal society were highly influential in fomenting passion and emotional attachment outside the periphery of marriage. The aristocratic milieu to which courtly love owes a lot hardly entertained marriage as a sacred institution, and medieval marriage was, more often than not, conditioned by utility in so far as all matches for marriage were settled on the basis of material gain. The feudal society treated wife in terms of a purchasable commodity and obviously she was no better than a piece of property to her husband. The nobles married not out of affection and attachment, but because of greedy inclination towards property and aristocratic inheritance they would secure by marrying the daughters of higher nobles. A ready means for the feudal male is then, observes H.O. Taylor, “to marry lands and serfs in the robust person of a daughter or a widow.”<sup>6</sup> At home, the feudal male dominated his wife and other members of the family. Frequent changes and dissolution of marriage were common place in medieval society, and in addition to that, the feudal male and warrior-nobles constantly remained away from home for war, and in their absence, their wives led a life of boredom and some of them mourned their slain husbands. Despite all stress and strain, if the wives opposed their husbands, they were freely beaten and treated with callous brutality. Against such a drab background of medieval marital life, courtship and extra martial passion gained a favourable ground, and the young knights who were entrusted with the responsibility of the castle tended to serve the castle lady by applying the art of *amour-cortois* that involved four basic principles: humility and courtesy (*cortezia*), adultery, love as longing and the religion of love.<sup>7</sup> Since idealization of passion is not possible within the purview marriage which symbolizes possession of wife/women, the troubadours, following the foot steps of the courteous knights, adulated adultery which presupposes insatiable passion, at least in theory, without the possession of the beloved. For the troubadours and the medieval knights, the courtly *domna* or the lady of the castle is feudally superior and is obviously idealised as ‘my lord’ (*maïdon*) and as beloved-goddess worthy of veneration and praise. Without her mercy and spiritual illumination, the courtly lover considers himself wretched. In the ordinary sense, she is another man’s wife; but in spiritual sense, the *domna* is the lover’s mentor, preceptor, beloved-saint, secret hymn and the supreme goddess (*Mahādevī*), who secures salvation for him on the altar of sense. Adultery is thus edifying when it is viewed from the stand point of spirituality. C.S. Lewis aptly observes:

Any idealization of sexual love in a society where marriage is purely utilitarian must begin by being an idealization of adultery. (Lewis, 1961: 13)

Courtly love is anti-Christian in that it flatly opposes the view of the church and the theologians of the Middle Ages who treated adultery as wicked and sensual passion, the most notorious element in human nature. The troubadourian viewpoint is that if true love is love in separation and suffering rather than union and carnal pleasure, its logical extension is love beyond marriage married love demands complete possession of the lady which defeats the very purpose of courtly love—idealization of passion. The troubadours therefore addressed wives of others and in this respect the adulterous love of Tristan and Iseult, of Lancelot and Guinevere provided an ideal for troubadour lyric poetry. Andrea Capellanus in his book *The Art of Courtly Love (De arte honeste amandi)* observes that ‘marriage is no real excuse for not loving’ (Andrea. p.184). In much the same way, the medieval ‘courts of love’ which resolved various disputes on love pronounced the similar verdict. The judgement of Marie, the Countess of Champagne runs thus:

We consider that marital affection and the true love of lovers are wholly different and arise from entirely different sources. (Capellanus, 1959: 171)

Extramarital passion logically leads to another important aspect of courtly love, i.e., love as longing and suffering in separation. Suffering and longing in separation are the hallmarks of courtly love, and the troubadour lover suffers and swoons, passes sleepless nights and gets emaciated and even dies on the ground that death is dignified in love. The infinite suffering of Tristan for Iseult reveals the most fundamental point that courtly love has a sad tale to tell and that passion is by nature fatal. Denis de Rougement in his book *Passion and Society* emphasizes this point:

Happy love has no history. Romance only comes into existence where love is fatal, frowned upon and doomed by life itself. What stirs lyrical poets to their finest flights is neither the delight of the senses nor the fruitful contentment of the settled couple; not the satisfaction of love, but its passion. And passion means suffering. There we have the fundamental fact. (Rougement, 1956: 33)

If passion means longing and suffering then courtly love professes passion as ‘Eros’, and ‘Eros’ with its origin pagan antiquity, is defined as ardent longing, burning in the fire of passion that causes tension and affliction leading to the point of madness. In Greek poetry and drama, Eros is an external as well as internal tyrant, and paradoxically embodies both life and death. Eros is ardent desire for union, an intensifying drive for self-knowledge, the binding element par excellence, the bridge between being and becoming. Eros drives one to create and expand where as sex is the handiest drug to blot out burning passion. Eros is desire, an end in itself; but sex is a need because it is prompted by a desire for possession and pleasurable relief. Sex is sleep, but Eros is constant awakening, remembering, savoring and discovering ever-new facets of life.<sup>8</sup> Plato’s presentation of Eros as a wandering hunter always weaving schemes of chasing the beautiful and the good, and the very fact of his birth to Penia (Poverty) and Poros (Resourcefulness) in the garden of Zeus justifies that Eros epitomizes longing for what is absent and that it represents an insatiable hunger for knowledge, an external quest

for truth.<sup>9</sup> The Hesiodic conception of Eros as a creative, cosmogonic and binding principle (*Theogony*, 116) combined with the platonic view point of Eros as the principle of unity in the midst of duality and multiplicities culminated in the Neoplatonic conception of Eros as sickening and drunken frenzy of the ecstatic soul experiencing mystical ascension and vision of the Supreme.<sup>10</sup> And following the Neoplatonic urge for ascension from the lower rungs to the higher ones in a state of constant upward progression, Eros was envisaged in the Middle Ages in terms of a ‘ladder’, a ‘chain’ an ‘arrow’ and after constant conflict, and ascillation between Christian Agape (descent) and Neoplatonic Eros (ascent), Origen (*Contra Celsum*, vi. 38), with his gnostic outlook, metamorphosed the Christian conception of ‘Agape as disinterested sacrifice into Agape as ‘Dive Eros’. He viewed, like Proclus’ ‘Chain of Eros’, God not as the object of Eros as in Plato, but as Eros himself. The chain of Eros brings God down. It is therefore imperative that by virtue of the illumination received from Divine Eros, the soul should strive for an ecstatic union with the Divine with the help of the wings of Eros. The ‘way up’ and the ‘way down’ are thus two sides of the same truth, i.e., Divine Eros.<sup>11</sup> While ingenuously utilizing the Neo-platonic pattern of mystical ladder of Eros, Gregory of Nyssa, like Origen, developed the gnostic theory of Eros and emphasized the mystical ascent of the soul in terms of sickening, passionate yearning and drunken frenzy and ecstatic vision of God. Gregory subscribes to the theory of Gnosticism that soul’s kinship with God is based on the principle of ‘original likeness’ which, however, does not mean that God and the soul are identical. Instead, it means that the soul has a flickering flash of the Divine within it and hence it constantly desires for going back to him. Gregory’s interpretation of the Biblical *Song of Songs* through the symbols of Eros such as ‘fire’, ‘flame’, ‘love’s arrow’, ‘chain of love’ and ‘sickening bride’ establishes the affinity between Neo-platonism and Gnosticism. With its root in ‘gnosis’ which means unraveling of a hideous mystery. Gnosticism as such aims at the freedom of soul from the fetters of body and the material world towards its heavenly abode through several disciplined stages of purification. Though Gnosticism, like Christianity believes in a Saviour, who descends to quicken the process of delivery of soul from the matter, both the religions differ sharply from each other in that the Saviour in the latter does not remain an abstract, in accessible and disinterested force to illumine the soul from far off place for its quick return to the Divine. Unlike the one in Christianity, the Saviour in Gnosticism simply ‘awakens’ rather than ‘saves’. The troubadours imbibed the Neoplatonic theory of Eros and the Gnostic theory of salvation by frequently referring to a ‘distant love’ at once inaccessible and abstract. Moreover, the Saviour is a ‘Female Principle (*domna*)’ which has nothing to do with either the God-father or the God-son. Courtly love is therefore heretical rather than Christian. F. Golding however claims that the Saviour or ‘distant love’ in Troubadour poetry is none but an ‘allegory for the Virgin Mary or the Holy Land.’<sup>12</sup> At a time when minne-poetry and bride mysticism were developed to conceive ‘love-divine’ in ‘human’ terms, and soul (bride)’s fellowship with God/Christ (bridegroom) was envisaged in terms of love and marriage within the bounds of the doctrine of *Caritas*, the troubadours professed love as Eros and brought down the sacred to the level of the ‘Profane’ on the ground that profane in its pure form is sacred indeed! With the secularization of divine love by minne-mystics, another startling development took place in the later Middle Ages in form of a markedly changed view of

women. There was a significant shift from the defiled Eve to the gracious mother epitomized by Virgin Mary, the treasure-house of mercy and affection and the reliable intermediary between the cursed men and the righteous God. In this connection, St. Bernard observes:

If you fear the father, there is Christ, the mediator. If you fear him, there is Mother, pure humanity. She will listen to thee. The son will listen to her, the Father to him. (Quoted in Green, 1971: 113)

Though F. Golding's viewpoint is vindicated here, we have reasons to contend that behind the rituals of romance in *amour-cortois*, there are influences other than the Christian concept of Mother-worship. It is needless to say that love in courtly love is directed to a lady of flesh and blood, not to Virgin Mary. Again, courtly love is based on refined sensuality in the level of the profane which the Christian concept of *caritas* (divine love) does not subscribe to Christian love, stands for disinterested self-sacrifice, whereas self-sacrifice in courtly love is a means to the lover's self-glorification—acquiring merit, virtue, nobility and goodness—and hence courtly love is acquisitive. Eros Christian love is *theocentric*, but courtly love is *ego-centric*. A. J. Denomy rightly observes:

Courtly love is essentially a love of concupiscence, mystical love essentially a love of benevolence. (Denomy, 1951: 192)

Antony Easthope categorically supports the anti-Christian nature of *amour-cortois*:

Whatever the source and quality of its aim, the object of courtly love is not God but a woman. (Easthope, 1989: 67)

The above arguments in support of the veneration of woman (*domna*) as the alpha and omega in troubadour mysticism prompts us to search for an oriental connection, particularly in with the erotic-esoteric rituals practised by the tantric Sahajiyās who considered 'body' as the basis of spontaneous love (*sahaja prema*) reminding us thereby of the dialectical position in John Donne's poetry: "Body is the book in which the pages of soul are written."

## II

As in the West, medieval Indian religion and philosophy experienced conflicts and interaction/assimilation of different thoughts and esoteric practices of which Śāktism Hindu and Buddhist Tantricism, Chaitanya Vaiṣṇavism and Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā cult stand prominent. Long before the emergence of the *bhakti*-movement in the Middle Ages, Indian mind had been dominantly pre-occupied with the thoughts of Śāktism, Śaivism and Tantricism and S.B. Dasgupta goes to the extreme extent of saying that "India is a land of Śākti vāda."<sup>13</sup> Precisely because of the deep-rooted influence Śāktism and Tantricism have exerted on the Indian mind from the very beginning by adulating the Primordial Goddess (Mahā Śākti) as the regulator of this universe. Śāktism as such points to a cult of worship of the Mother Goddess as Śākti which means 'to be able' to *act* as well as *activate*/energize the whole cosmos. Śākti, because of its productive capacity is symbolically female, the Supreme Power (Parā-Śākti) of the Supreme-self

and (Parā-Brahman). Like Virgin Mary, She is a kind Mother, but unlike the former, She is the creatrix of the universe, the active aspect of the immanent God who creates the universe in association with Śiva, the Supreme Lord of the Śākta philosophy. She also manifests herself in the three *guṇas* (prime attributes), i.e., pure (*sattva*), action (*raja*) and delusion (*tama*) thereby determining the course of creation, preservation and destruction. As Universal Mother (Jagadambā), She is the embodiment of wisdom, peace and immortal bliss, whereas air, earth, water, fire and ether are all manifestation of her gross form (*aparā-śakti*). On the other hand, life element is her *parā-śakti* (Supreme Power) and mind, a modification of consciousness (*cit-śakti*)—the reason why She is called Blissful Consciousness (*Citdrupīṇī*). As the original and innate power (Svarupā Śākti) of the Absolute, She is the supporter of the universe, whereas She delights the Lord as the sportive power (*līlā-śakti*) and as Supreme Power (*parā-śakti*). She is the soothing mother of the ailing humanity because She protects, consoles, cheers, nurses and blesses her devoted sons and daughters of the world. Such a concept of benign Mother as developed in *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* and other Śākta texts<sup>14</sup> with many-sided glory is really rare in the West. It is in India that Śākti is considered to be the centre of the life of the universe because She vitalizes it through her energy. Swami Sivananda writes:

She is the energy in the Sun, the fragrance in the flowers, the beauty in the landscape, the Gāyatri or the Blessed Mother in the Vedas, colour in the rainbow, intelligence in the mind, potency in the homeopathic pills, power in Makaradhvaja and gold oxide, will and *vicāra śakti* in sages, devotion in bhaktas, Samyāra and Samādhi in Yogins. (Sivananda, 1986: 69).

Sivananda's observation shows that Śākta philosophy is essentially Vedantic and that Śākti and Śiva are basically one and inseparable just as fire and heat go together. Śākta philosophy is pre-occupied with the metaphysical position of Non-dualism (*advaitavāda*) that reality is one, i.e., *sat* (Existence), *cit* (Consciousness) and *ānanda* (Bliss)—the nature of Pure Consciousness which manifests the universe through illusion (*māyā*) and the owner of *māyā* is called the *Great Lord* (Maheśvara). It is in association with the *Māyā-śakti* that the Absolute becomes the Lord of attributes (Saguṇa-Brahman), and again, it is Śākti that makes Him determinate (*vyakta*) and manifests from the state of unmanifested (*avyakta*) by endowing all attributes to Him. It is by virtue of Śākti that the one becomes multitudes and again, it is the same Śākti that takes all multitudes back, at the state of utter annihilation, for final dissolution into one justifying the non-dualistic stance of Śāktism.

Tantricism which is an extension of Śāktism attests (to) the non-dualistic philosophy of Upaniṣads and the mystic worship of Śākti as female energy on the basis that the Universal Mother is the reservoir of boundless grace, illimitable mercy and infinite knowledge. She bestows not only material prosperity, but also devotion (*bhakti*) and liberation (*mukti*). Knowing all these things fairly well, the Tantric Sādhaka feels at

ease with the Divine Mother, and prostrates before her with frankness and humility. He sings her praise, worships her with wise faith and devotion, and finally makes a total surrender to her. The tantric view of life is that sorrow and bondage in life are caused by bi-polar existence and as such the aim of tantric sādhanā is to heal the duality for realizing the fact that one is all and all is one. But unlike Śaṅkara, the exponent of pure monism (*keval-advaita*) who holds God as the only truth and the world of phenomena as illusory, Tantra envisages both the worlds as real. For a Tantrika, the world is real and body is the altar of all sādhanā. Body is the microcosm of the universe, the abode of Śiva and Śakti, the former is located as the principle of Pure Consciousness in the highest circle of thousand petals (Sahasrāra) in the region of cerebrum, and the latter (Śakti) remains in the form of a serpentine power at the mulādhāra circle located above the anus. Śiva and Śakti, the cosmic male and female, are also envisaged in microcosmic level as human male and human female. Therefore, the profane represents the sacred. The idea is also applicable to human love which served as a simile for the Divine. In other words, human love is like the Divine—the paradigm of the love between Śiva and Śakti. Body which is condemned by the rationalists as the seat of all sufferings and all defilement is glorified in Tantra as the seat of all sādhanā, and therefore the sādhanā resorts to a coterie of mystic formulae rites and rituals to protect the glory and sanctity of body, and to identify the various centres in his body through which he can attain the ultimate state of non-duality. O.V. Garrison aptly observes that “he who realises the truth of the body can then come to know the truth of the universe.”<sup>15</sup> Tantra emphasizes the complete identity of Nirvāṇa (salvation) and saṃsāra (world) of the Absolute and the phenomenal modes of existence. *The Hevajra Tantra* while bringing a homology between sacred and profane maintains that “there is no nirvāṇa other than saṃsāra.”<sup>16</sup> Mircea Eliade puts in the same spirit the objective of Tantra:

The tantrika does not renounce the world, as the sage of the Upaniṣad, the yogi or the Buddha does; instead, he tries to overcome it while enjoying perfect freedom. (Eliade, 1974: 144)

The Tantra philosophy further enjoins that there is no higher heaven than the pure senses and that the way of passionate attachment (*pravṛtti mārga*) with emphasis on emotion (*bhāva*), affectionate attachment (*anurāga*) and love (*kāma*) is the surest key to salvation. Sense is divine, and since body is the microcosm of the universe, enjoyment (*bhoga*) is the befitting means to mystical union (*yoga*). The tantric way consists not in the mortification of flesh nor in its unnatural suppression but in rapturous, free and full enjoyment. However, it is important to note that the ultimate goal is not to get lost in sensual pleasure and that the Sādhaka should use ‘profane’ as the means to attain the ‘sacred.’ And while so doing, he wins passion through fulfillment. The *sense* is overcome through the *senses*. Knowing it pretty well that passion can *kill* as well as *heal*, the Sādhaka is expected to play with the fire of passion without being burnt. He has the risk of fighting the snake (*kāma*) without being bitten by it. The perfect union between Śiva and Śakti, otherwise called non-duality (*yuganaddha*) is also realized in the level of the profane in which every male and female in the mundane world represent Śiva and Śakti. Whereas the Tantric Sādhaka visualizes himself as Śiva (*Śivoham*), his female partner (Sādhikā) is conceived of as Śakti. *The Śaktisaṅgama Tantra*<sup>17</sup> eulogizes

woman as the creator of the universe and as the embodiment of God’s inexhaustible creative force, whereas *The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* envisages woman as the epitome of the Cosmic Energy or the ‘Universal fluid force’ in the profane form. Therefore it is imperative on the part of the Sādhaka to go for a ritualistic union with his female partner to relish the state of non-duality. The sādhanā becomes futile if it is degenerated into bestiality. Charlott Vaudeville observes:

The female partner, therefore, ought to be considered under a purely sexual angle as a manifestation of Divine Energy or Female Principle, rather than as a woman love in the full human sense, being not permissible to a Yogi... The love symbolism of the Tantric schools tends to isolate the sexual act from its human context and ignore the personal aspect of love-relationship. (Vaudeville, 1962: 32)

In the Hindu Tantra, the erotic-esoteric ritual is carried on through two modes of worship, i.e., the right-handed form of worship (*dakṣiṇācāra*) and its left-hand counterpart (*vāmācāra*). Whereas in the *former* the five necessary ingredients (*pañcamakara*)—wine, fish, meat, parched grain and copulation—are replaced by substitutes like coconut water, vegetables and cereals, in case of the latter, the ingredients are physically used. Sexual contact (*maithuna*) in right-hand worship is sanctioned either with the aspirant’s own wife or attained through the yogic union of serpentine power (*kuṇḍalinī śakti*) with Śiva in the Sādhaka’s own body. But, in left-hand worship, an elaborate mystic-erotic ritual is observed. As in troubadour esoteric practice, the left-handed worshipper prefers an extramarital partner (*parakiyā*), because ritualistic copulation with his wife is considered detrimental to perfection (*siddhi*). To him, as it is for the troubadour lover and the medieval knight, marriage asks for legitimate indulgence/possession rather than self-control/continence. Like the courtly lover who admires the physical beauty and youth of the *domna* with perennial freshers and aesthetic alacrity, the Sādhaka, according to the *Śaktisaṅgama Tantra*<sup>18</sup> should select a tender, passionate, truly lovable and beautiful lady. Intoxicated with passion, she should be moved by desire (*kāma*) and should be qualified only for ‘true love’. One can comfortably correlate here the tantric outlook and choice with that of the troubadours who professed passion as ‘Eros’—an ardent desire—and who distinguished pure love (*amor-purus*) from ‘mixed love’. Andrea enjoins that desire for gross sensual satisfaction degenerates the Sādhaka into a beast worthy of hell:

Blindness is a bar to love... there are men who are slaves to such passionate desire... when they see another woman straight way desire her embraces, and they forget about the services they have received from their first love... Men of this kind lust after every woman they see; their love is like that of a shameless dog. They should rather, I believe, be compared to asses. (Capellanus, 1959: 33)

While singing the glory of ‘true love’, the troubadour Bernart de Ventadorn declares that love is the source of all virtue, and that life without love is no better than death. In Bernart’s scheme of life, love is considered an absolute necessity in so far as

it makes man excellent and worthy of living a noble life. In much the same way, to the troubadour Marcabru, love is the source of all delight and excellence. It is characterized by truth (*verai*), purity (*fin*), goodness (*bona*), nobility, humility and courtesy (*cortezia*). While echoing Andrea's philosophy of love, Marcabru launches a series of diatribes against 'mixed love' and false lovers who enhance crime and defame pure love:

Ah! Noble love; fount of all goodness, who have illumined all the world. (Press, 1985: 53)

Time and again, the troubadours sing the ennobling power of passion as the fountain source of all virtues and goodness. A.J. Denomy observes:

The very essence of courtly love is its ennobling force, the elevation of the lover affected by a ceaseless desire. (Denomy, 1947: 23)

Back to the tantric erotic ritual again after the selection of the female-initiate, the Sādhaka purifies the seat for her and then the vijayā bowl of hemp which is offered as libation to the Primordial Śakti, and then the Sādhaka drinks the potion and goes for invoking some auxiliary goddesses (*mātrkā*) and his own chosen deity (*iṣṭadevatā*) with flowers, incense-sticks and chanting of the secret root syllable (*bijamantra*). The subsequent steps of ritualistic worship that follow include occupying the circle (*cakrāsana*) purification of essence (*tattva-śūddhi*), purification of the visible (*sthūla*) and the subtle (*paradeha*) body, taking ritual food and finally repairing to a couch for union (*maithuna*). The couch is sacralised and is metamorphosed into a seat of perfection. The female partner is then consecrated with sacred path (*mahātirtha*), the Sādhaka puts fragrant oil to her hair, combs her allows her to anoint herself, dresses her in red robes. He purifies her by sprinkling holy water on her head and observes the ritualistic touch of her six limbs—forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, arms and thighs. In the long last, the female partner disrobes herself and the Sādhaka stands stupefied so as to contemplate the immortal beauty of the Divine Mother in her nude physical form at midnight in the deep violet hue of the dim lamp light. While worshipping the delicate parts of her body, the initiate mutters all through the 'Klim' root which justifies the importance of *Kāma*, the god of love in Indian mythology religion. Whereas the Hindu tantra sanctions ejaculation as oblation into fire, in Buddhist Tantra, coitus stabilizes the 'three jewels' (*triratna*)—breath, thought and semen. A. Bharati rightly observes that the Buddhist tantrika's concern is 'purely esoteric, his method is experimental.' (Bharati, 1965: 23)

However, despite certain differences, the ultimate concern in both Buddhist and Hindu Tantra is realization of Śivahood/Bodhisatva *signifying* truth or knowledge and *Mahāsukha*—Great Bliss—which is described as the abode of indescribable joy as well as liberation. S.B. Dasgupta describes it as incessant bliss (*satata-sukhamaya*):

It is the seed of all substance; it is the ultimate stage of those who have attained perfection, it is highest place of the Buddhas and is

called *Sukhavatī*—the abode of bliss. (Dasgupta, 1974: 135)

One who attains 'Great Bliss' becomes the potential Buddha, the perfectly enlightened one, whose sole aim is not to seek liberation from the cycle of birth and death, but to dedicate his life for burning the lamp of knowledge for the fallen and sorrow-stricken mankind. With full control over his senses, the enlightened initiate practices the best virtues (*pāramitas*) and attains an enlightened mind (*bodhi-citta*) which is characterized by deep sympathy and universal compassion (*mahā-karuṇa*). Here, one can make a startling correlation of the tantric realization of *mahāsukha* with the troubadourian concept of *jois* which is born out of the erotic-esoteric endeavour called 'coitu inllumination'—sexual union that leads to spiritual illumination, nobility, generosity, spirit of self-sacrifice, truth (*verai*), purity (*fin*) and goodness (*bona*). Since coitus (*maithuna*) is denied in courtly love, it is the pure love and incessant desire coupled with an elaborate paraphernalia of worship and service (reminiscent of the service to the navaṇāyikā in tantric tradition) that allows the troubadour lover-sādhaka to land in the abode of *mahāsukha* (*jois*). Whereas 'bliss' in tantric tradition is a concrete experience yet indescribable and ineffable, *jois* in troubadour esotericism is at once imaginative, psychological, visually satisfying and spiritually felt. The troubadour cercamon tends to relish 'pure joy' by contemplating the *domna*'s physical beauty which is characterized by nobility, divinity and moral goodness. Again, it is the lover's contemplation of her fine physical form at the very first sight that foment passion in the troubadour Sordello. The more he thinks of her beauty, the greater is the intensity of passion and *jois* in him. Her beauty seduces him. Her enticing eyes, serene brows, sweet glances, blond hair, rosy lips, ivory teeth, fair complexion (whiter than ivory) have maddened the courtly lover in the lyrics of Bernart, Guillaume IX of Aquitaine, Jaufre Rudel and Cercamon. Thus sings Sordello:

Gently she knew how to steal my pure heart from me, when first I beheld her, with a sweet loving glances which her thieving eyes cast on me. With that glance, on that day, love entered through the eyes into my heart, and in such guise that it drew my heart from me and placed at her command, so that it is with her wherever I go or dwell. (Press, 1985: 243)

In courtly love, purity consists in the union of true mind and heart, and in the absence of physical union (at least in theory) what counts much is constant longing, sickening and suffering inseparation often tending towards emotional madness and idealised frustration. Passion kills passion; the fire of passion annihilates, through suffering and constant service, the baser elements in it and the courtly lover finally comes out a pure piece of gold after a protracted burning in the purgatory of passion. Andrea observes:

(Passion) arises out of the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embrace of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace. (Capellanus, 1959: 28)

what is permissible is 'embrace' and 'service' the feudally superior beloved-goddess rather than union. The lover's sickness can be cured by the beloved physician, if she

pleases, with a remedy in form of a 'sweet kiss' physical joy is permissible to that extent only. It is an aesthetic experience associated with 'feeling', 'emotion' or 'passion' arising from the possession or the expectation of the gift of love. To Bernart, it is an overwhelming ecstasy that can be felt rather than expressed: "With the joy that I feel, I neither see nor hear nor know what I am told nor what is done to me."<sup>19</sup> One can search for an apt parallel to Bernart's *joi* in the overwhelming state of devotional feeling (*bhakti*) in medieval India which is, according to sage Nārada, indescribable (*anirbacaniya*) but relishable like the feeling of a dumb person (*mukavādanāvat*).<sup>20</sup> It is also possible that the troubadours who describe the gay spring time green meadows and thick orchards and sweet sounding birds, experience *joie* prompted by the pleasure and the delight in the contemplation of nature. Again, be it concrete or abstract, subjective or nature-born, the *jois* can also designate the objective delight or pleasure that love brings or promises. Moreover, these can be no better place or person for joy than the beloved (*domna*) because she is the fount from which all other joys flow. Guillaume IX sings that all the joys of the world are available to him through love. Love of a worthy woman keeps the lover in a state of joy and that permanent condition of bliss is the natural abode just as water is the natural sphere of the fish. The troubadour Arnaut de Mareuil sings in praise of natural bliss:

Just as the fish spend their life in water, I spend mine and shall spend it always in joy, because love has made me choose a lady whence I live joyous merely from the desire I have for her. So worthy is she, that when I ponder over it, pride surges forth in me and my humility increases; but love and joy holds them fast to such an extent that moderation and right judgement do not vanish. (Johnston, 1935: 44)

Even as Mareuil conceives of joy in the womb of love, Marcabru intimately associates it with *Jovens* and *Pretz* epitomising eternal nuances of youth, vigour, patience and moderation and declares that joy and evil are incompatible and that complacent husbands, shameless wives and misers are unfit for the culture of *Jovens* and *Jois*. *Jovens*<sup>21</sup> implies a socio-moral code of conduct, apart from a gay disposition peculiar to youth and it has a striking parallel in the tantric concept of youth and the Arabic concept of *fityan*. The tantrik Sādhaka, like the troubadour lover, is an aesthete, whose worship of a beautiful maiden reveals that protection of youth and glorification of beauty is a necessity for the culture of love. The troubadourian emphasis on moderation, right judgement and goodness can be correlated with Tantric emphasis on good percentage, pure mind, intelligence, self-control (retention of semen in Buddhist tantra) and good deeds. *The Mahārudrayāmala-Tantra* declares that the lechers, shameless, greedy, hypocrite, voluptuary and drunkards to be unfit for *Sādhana*. The Arabic concept of *fityan* (*futuwwa*) which was given a spiritual significance in Sufism, denotes an ideal disposition signifying humility, devotion, liberality, self-denial and sexual abstinence and with due regard to Ezra Pound's detection of oriental feeling in Troubadour esotericism, it may be opined that the tantric and the Arabic concept of youth is echoed in the troubadour concept of *Jovens*, just as the concept of Mahāsukha has striking similarities in the troubadour concept of *jois*. The Troubadourian distinction between *mesura* and sensual indulgence is a continuation of the Buddhist tantric conflict between

retention of semen and its awful waste. That Marcabru's emphasis on *Mesura* (moderation and control) is decidedly tantric in origin is evident from his *poem* "Pax in nomini Domini" in which the name of Jehosaphat—the Arabic Yudhasaf and Indian Buddha—appears as the embodiment of purity and self-control:

...Hear what he says, how in His Kindness the heavenly Lord has fashioned for us a wash-place near at hand, such as there never was except overseas, yonder by *Jehosaphat* and by this one here I bring you comfort." (Press, 1985: 47).

Ezra Pound's inclination to connect oriental thought/Sufism with troubadour esotericism, and impact of Buddhism on Sufism can be ascertained from R.A. Nicholson's<sup>22</sup> observation that Sufism as 'a complex thing' derives inspiration from Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, Manichaeism, Vedanta and Buddhism. More significantly, Denis de Rougement<sup>23</sup> argues that following continuous cultural encounter between India and the Arabs on the one hand and Spain and France on the other, there was easy transmission of Buddhist tantricism, Manichaeism, Gnosticism and Sufism into Southern France—the land of troubadours. He observes that Buddhist-tantric thought influenced the provençal heresy called 'Catharism' or 'Albigensianism' which emphasizes a long course of ascetic discipline involving perpetual chastity, celibacy, suffering, sacrifice, self-renunciation and abstaining from sexual contact with wife. The initiation ceremony in Catharism entails fasting for forty days which reminds us of the 'service of woman' in Buddhist Tantricism that breaks up into ordeals of forty days. Both A.J. Denomy and Roger Boase emphasize the connection of troubadourian esotericism with Catharism<sup>24</sup> Again, Rougement points to the Buddhist text, *Romance of Balaam and Jehosaphat* in which Bhagavan (Balaam) and Buddha (Jehosaphat) do appear significantly and the text, according to him, influenced the twelfth century heretics of provence.<sup>25</sup>

The troubadours professed a cult of worship in which the beloved (*domna*) becomes a Goddess. This concept is originally Indian because Śaktism and Tantricism visualized the primordial Śakti as all pervading. Every woman is the embodiment of Śakti. The troubadourian thought of attributing 'divine beauty,' to the *domna* corresponds to the Tantric Sahajiyā theory of attribution (*āropa*) of the cosmic form (*svarupa*) of the Primal Śakti which is manifested in every woman. After initiation and ritualistic observances, the divine 'fluid' is aroused in the Sādhikā and she is transformed into a woman of exception (*viśeṣa-rati*) as different from the ordinary woman (*Sāmānya rati*). To the Troubadours, as it is for the tantric Sādhaka, she is the fount of wisdom and *joī* (*mahāsukha*). Surprisingly, the troubadourian *domna* (donna) bears striking similarity (in name) with the esoteric lady of the Tantric Siddhācāryas, i.e., *dombi* (domi). The *dombi* is mystically conceived as an 'invisible power' exactly in the same way the troubadour Jaufre Rudel sings of 'abstract jois' and an invisible and unattainable lady with whom he falls in love without seeing her. The troubadour ritual of *donnoi* transfigures the *domna* from the level of the profane to that of spirituality. In both the traditions, there is an erotic-esoteric progression from Eros to *Amor* and *Jois* and from *Kāma* to *Prema* and *Mahāsukha*. O.V. Garrison observes that "William of Poitiers, one of the first troubadours, unequivocally spells out this Tantric nature of donnoi."<sup>26</sup>



In conclusion, it must be conceded that Tantric Sahajiyā thought's passed on to Europe, particularly Provence, through the Arabs and that Kāma and Eros are metamorphosed into 'Amor' and *Prema* finally culminating in *jois* and mahāsukha. But the very nature of bliss shows that the troubadours acted upon provençal dualism, whereas Tantric Sādhana tends to dissolve dualities for realizing the monistic unity.

### Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> See T.S. Eliot, ed., *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, London: Faber and Faber, 1954, p. 95.
- <sup>2</sup> O.V. Garrison, *Tantra: The Yoga of Sex*, New York: The Julian Press, 1964, p.127. Also see, Denis de Rougement, *Passion and Society*, trans. Montgomery Belgion, Faber and Faber, 1956, p.113.
- <sup>3</sup> Interestingly, there were a good many real 'courts of love' in France during the Middle Ages that patronized the troubadours. The courtly culture grew in Toulouse, Poitou, Limousin and Champagne, which was a reputed seat of luxury and literary taste. See. John, F. Benton, 'The Court of Champagne as a Literary Centre, *Speculum*, XXVI: 61. pp. 551-591.
- <sup>4</sup> Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love*, Oxford: Manchester Univ. Press, 1977, p. 1.
- <sup>5</sup> March Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans, L.A. Manyon, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962. p. 232. The feudal relationship between the Lord and the Vassal prompted the troubadours to extend their extramarital passion for the domna. Painter observes that 'one of the basic tenets of feudal custom demanded that a vassal should respect and if necessary defend with his life the chastity of his Lord's life.'
- Sideny Painter, *French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideas and Practices in Medieval France*, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962. pp. 102-103.
- <sup>6</sup> H.O. Taylor, *The Medieval Mind*, Vol. I. New York, 1925, p. 571.
- <sup>7</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, Oxford, 1961. p.2.
- <sup>8</sup> Rollo May, *Love and Will*, W.W.Norton, New York, 1969, pp. 74-75.
- <sup>9</sup> Plato's *Symposium* (204c). cf. Mark. P.O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, 2nd edn., London: Longman, 1977, pp. 74-75.
- <sup>10</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads* (VI.7.36) cf. R.T. Wallis. *Neo-platonism*, Gerald Duckworth, London, 1972. p. 3.
- <sup>11</sup> Andersen Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. P.S. Watson, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1938, p.353.
- <sup>12</sup> F. Golding, *Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvers*, New York: Anchor Books, 1973, p.62.
- <sup>13</sup> S.B. Dasgupta, *Bhārater Śakti Sādhana O Śākta Sāhitya* (Bengali), Sisu Sahitya Sansada, B.S. 1392, p.7.
- <sup>14</sup> The *Devī-Sūktā of Āg Veda* (VII.7-11) states that Śakti reveals herself everywhere in things both infinite and finite The *Devī Mahātmya of Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* eulogizes the Goddess as at once the cause of bondage and salvation, the ultimate cause of all causes.
- <sup>15</sup> O.V. Garrison, op.cit., p. xv. *The Kulārṇava Tantra* declares that one must lift oneself by the aid of the ground, as one falls on the ground. Passion is the instrument to heal passion.

<sup>16</sup> *The Hevajra Tantra*, trans. D.L. Snellgrove, Pt. II, (IV-32), Oxford Univ. Press, 1980. p. 34.

<sup>17</sup> Cited in Giuseppe Tucci, *Ratilila*, trans. James Hogarth, Geneva: Negel Publishers, 1969, p.34.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.41.ven

<sup>19</sup> Carl Appel, *Bernard ven Ventdown*, Halle, 1915, pp. 76-77, cited in A.J. Denomy, 'Jois among the Early Troubadours: Its Meaning and Possible Sources,' p. 177.

<sup>20</sup> *Nārada Bhaktisūtra* (2): Nārada defines the highest devotion as the most intense love (*parama premarūpa*) intense longing (*parama-vyākulatā*). Devotional love (*bhakti*) is intense attachment (*anurāga*) that begets nectar (*amṛta*) or divine bliss relish (*rasa*) on getting which the devotee becomes over-joyed, perfect and pure—a state that reminds us of the condition of the lover in Bernart's lyric poetry.

<sup>21</sup> A.J. Denomy, "Javens: The Nation of Youth among the Troubadours, its Meaning and Source" *Medieval Studies*, XI, Pontific Institute, 1949, pp. 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> R.A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabas*, London: Cambridge Univ. Press, p. 297. Also see Nicholson's "The Mystics of Islam", in *Understanding Mysticism*, Richard Woods, ed., New York: Image Books, 1980; "The Sufi Conception of the Passing Away (fana) of the Individual Self as Universal Being is, certainly, I think, of Indian origin."

<sup>23</sup> Rougement, *Passion and Society*, p.121.

<sup>24</sup> A.J. Denomy, "An Inquiry into the Origin of Courtly Love", En. 4. p. 258. Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love*, p.77.

<sup>25</sup> Rougement, op.cit., p.121.

<sup>26</sup> O.V. Garrison, op. cit, p.126. Besides William, these are Peire Vidal and Amount Daniel who tacitly refer to the technique of donnai which was practiced in the medieval castles by knights and the sovereign lady, who, being a staunch follower of Cathartic heresy, encouraged the secret ritual of love called 'asag' in which the knight was supposed to pass an entire night naked with the lady without giving into temptation. The tantric manner of rapturous gazing is echoed by Arnaut Daniel through a lovely blue mantle." See A.R. Press, pp. 177, 197.

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## **The Dravidian Aesthetics in Anita Desai: A Feminist Perspective**

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### **Introduction**

Literature is the finest and the most resourceful approach of manifestation, illuminating or sustaining or resuscitating the various social movements. Srinivasa Iyengar quotes Gandhiji as regards the use of English by the Indian writers to convey their message to the readers: "The purpose of writing is to communicate, isn't it? If so, say your say in any language that comes to hand". (Iyengar, iv) But the Indian literature comprises many literatures—Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, and Bengali and so on. But ideologically, it is Indian in thought and feeling and emotion and experience. The portrayal of society in Indian literature is anything but candid and forthright. Indian novel, in particular, is an end product of the Indian renaissance; it came into vogue as an upshot of the bearing of the west on Indian life and literature. It records the constant commotion and the ensuing fruition and reconstruction in society. The transition may take different forms—status of life, ethnicity, bearings and ethics of men as well as the behavioural paradigm. "Basically social change implies first, internal differentiation or multiplication of forms of roles and relationships within a social structure and secondly, replacement of older structures by new structures". (Bisaria, 28) "The Indian English novel to-day has bloomed and blossomed into variegated tapestries, tastes and sensibilities offering a variety fair to the reader in India and abroad". (Dasan, 10)

The mien of the contemporary Indian novelists also expounds an unambiguous and conspicuous divergence from the post modernist 'nihilism' thanks to the Indian roots, Indian aesthetics, creative imagination and compassionate posture. "Indic art imitates life as all arts do. Imitation is a two-dimensional process—gathering of knowledge of life that is fragmentary and distilling and discerning the knowledge that is poignant with eternal verities.... Indian literary aesthetics has a tradition of celebrating compassionate humanism without any precondition and superimposing agenda". (Dasan 15)

Thus the novel as a social act presages that there are positive alternatives to the smothering negatives in life. The same is the watchword of the Dravidian culture that attempts radical adaptations at the familial and societal strata to increment and supplement the excellence and elegance of living towards the emancipation of women.

## Anita Desai and Her Feminist Stance

The state of women in Indian society is subjected to considerable change. Earlier women were stripped of social status and veracity. Now their clout in social and cultural set up is seen in these arrays—"the constitutional right to equality of opportunity and status before law, right against discrimination, right to property, reservation of seats in legislative bodies at different levels, right of choice in marriage and numerous other rights and privileges". (Sorot, 77) Vimala Patil has this to affirm on this premise: "Women in India have changed at a faster rate than women anywhere else in the world and their 'attitude' has changed the very face of our society". (Patil, III)

But in spite of all these vociferous avocations broadcasted through various literary genres, the post colonial Indian society depicts a dissimilar impression. In fact, the Indian women writers in English were branded 'sub-altern' by the male dominated Indian literature, thus prevailing upon their sustaining and indisputable roles. But shunning the protests and braving the challenges, this select band of writers unveil the status and context of modern women in all their facets—the fall, the rise, the fall-rise and the rise-fall. In the guise of tradition, man humiliates woman, keeping her under permanent crunching shackles, physically and mentally.

Anita Desai's strong suit is chiefly human relationship—reminiscent of the Dravidian thoughts. "Her women characters herald a new morality which is not confined to physical chastity. It demands accommodation of individual longing for self-fulfillment." (Desai, 3.1 1978: 2) Desai's role in sensitizing readers about the Indian views of feminine sense and sensibility against cultural imperialism and tradition-bound outlook, sacraments and institutions that means subjugation of women has been breathtaking indeed. Her fiction stands as a collective metaphor for her ways of celebrating womanhood in the midst of conflicting ideologies, human bondages and phallo-centric notions of womanhood. (Dasan, 2006: 58)

Most of her fictional female characters are existential characters jittery in asserting against suppression and voicelessness. Her aesthetic rootedness in Indian culture in no way contradicts her value stances against the ill-treatment of women.

### The Emblematic Prototype

"...*Fasting, Feasting* is a most beautiful novel, very moving, very funny, terribly illustrative of what happens to women in different parts of the world." (Kaufmann, ii) In general many modern critics are susceptible to flout stylistic and structural excellences of innovative works, riveted more on thematic explications. But this novel is all in one—gripping, sparkling and neurotic—a scrutiny of the conundrum of feminine existentialism not only in the post independent India but in the more progressive socio cultural landscape also.

*Fasting, Feasting* has two clear cut apportionments—the comparative investigation between Indian family machinations, socio-cultural and spiritual, and the familial existentialism in America. The former is tradition-bound and the latter is altruistic and acquisitive, the unifying facet being the female characters.

The Indian state of affairs is populated by Uma, Aruna, Arun, Anamika and Mira-Masi. The seemingly close-knit structure of the family is pictured in Anita Desai's words: "It was hard to believe they had ever had separate existences, that they had been separate entities and not Mama Papa in one breath." (Desai, 1999: 9) But, but for Uma, others effortlessly and clandestinely indulge in surreptitious activities. Docility is Uma. A succession of happenings sounds the death-knell leading to Uma's regression. The birth of Arun, the long-awaited heir of the family, strikes down her academic career. Uma needs to be educated in domestic chores of house work or baby sitting. Her show of reluctance is doused with bullying galore: "Uma tried to protest when the order began to come thick and fast. This made Mama look stern again. 'You know we can't leave the baby to the servant.'" (Desai, 97) As soon as she attains puberty, Uma's parents make vigorous and frenzied efforts, as if panic-stricken, to 'celebrate' her marriage. The first proposer is enamoured of her coquettish younger sister, Aruna, just thirteen years old. The second proposal also does not mature into a success, failing at the betrothal stage and not before the swindling of a sizable sum as dowry. Such catastrophes leading to melancholy is made more poignant with the remarks of Aruna: "... a certain mockery was creeping into her behaviour, a kind of goading, like that a sprightly little dog will subject a large dull ox to when it wants a little action." (Desai, 97) Anita Desai's seeming scepticism and irresolution of the familial environment are reiterated in the following articulation: "The tightly knit fabric of family that had seemed so stifling and confining now revealed holes and gaps that were frightening—perhaps the fabric would not hold, perhaps it would not protect after all." (Desai, 142) Mira-Masi, the good old widow and aunt of Uma, perhaps, is the only reserve of reassurance and succor after the mortifying calamities of the arranged marriages of the 'ill-fated' Uma. Mira-Masi pacifies: "She is blessed by the Lord. The Lord has rejected the men you chose for her because He has chosen her for Himself." (Desai, 61) Anita Desai frames Uma's state of mind: "that of an outcaste from the world of marriage ....retreating to her room, she sank down on the floor, against the wall and put her arms around her knees and wondered what it would have been like to have the Lord Shiva for a husband, have Him put His arms around her." (Desai, 101) The desolate and estranged Uma was permitted to visit neither her neighbours nor the convent nearby as her parents had the inherent mistrust that she would embrace Christianity. Her contemplation of getaway from this murky survival in the shape of a career, endorsed in the words of Dr. Dutt, "... a young woman with no employment, who has been running the house for her parents for long. I feel sure you would be right for the job", (Desai, 101) is frowned upon by Papa. Her dream remains unconsummated and she is holed up in her mind-numbing subsistence.

Anita Desai has a representative style of making her internally chaotic central characters find communication by affiliation with exterior ambiance: "At night, she lay quietly on her mat, listening to the ashram dogs bark...then other dogs...barked back...gradually the barks drowned. Then it was silence. That was what Uma felt her own life to have been—full of barks, howls, messages and now silence." (Desai, 131)

Aruna, the tenacious younger sister of Uma, goes against everything traditional. The wedding is unlike: "This was to be an event so chic and untraditional—as had never been witnessed before in the town, at least by their relatives." (Desai, 86)

Aruna herself becomes a changed personality: "...every trace of her provincial roots...obliterated and overlaid by the bright sheen of metropolis." (Desai, 86) Ultimately, Aruna becomes a quarry of her own preferences with her westernized lifestyle, leading her to a point of no return. By flaking her own conformist role of a typical Indian wife, mother and daughter-in-law and faking an eccentric, contrived and unfeasible neo-colonial lifestyle, she remains 'aloof' in the socio-cultural milieu, not only losing the benefaction but also earning the scorn and the censure of the parents and relatives. Her phobic consciousness and the ensuing claustrophobic schizizophrenia alter her into an android.

Anamika, Uma's cousin, is another demonstration of the tragic fiasco in marriage. Her parents' wish insinuates a deep-seated rampant evil prevalent in the traditional Indian society. Disregarding Anamika's pleasant demeanour and short entity, her parents 'drown' her in a 'good' family. The groom is "much older than Anamika, so grim-faced and conscious of his own superiority ...insufferably proud and kept everyone at a distance...he barely seemed to notice Anamika...impervious to Anamika's beauty, grace and superiority." (Desai, 69) Anamika's wrapping up is that she "...was simply an interloper, someone brought in because she would, by marrying him, enhance his superiority to other men. So they had to tolerate her." (Desai, 10) At home, her dismal predicament is implausible—receiving regular blows from her mother-in-law with her husband standing as a mute witness, endless cooking schedules to satisfy the insatiable hunger of all and sundry in the family, massaging the feet of her mother-in-law or tidying the heap of clothes, no outings except the occasional brief ones to the temple, that too, in the company of other women and unfortunate enough in not having sanctioned private company of her husband. In spite of all these, she managed to conceive but the unvarying beatings of her mother-in-law leads to miscarriage and irreversible disability. Even her self-immolation and the subsequent death do not perturb her parents who could just dismiss the episode by throwing the blame on fate—"that it was fate, God had willed it and it was Anamika's destiny." (151) Thus Anamika was relinquished at the altar of marriage.

Mira-Masi is the only woman in the novel who feels emancipated. Her sparse needs—a bland diet of uncooked food, austere lifestyle, compromise with family rituals—make her a courageous individual capable of coping with the unnatural and crooked world outside. She could blend judiciously the inner and outer worlds without relegating either to the background. She does not detach herself from the outside world: she, in fact, relishes gossiping and carries tales from one family to another. She could renounce her material comforts and ignore its snares. As such, she could achieve inner freedom and comfort and remain a source of retreat for comfort for others.

In Part II of the novel, two more female characters materialize, Mrs. Pattons and Melaine, asphyxiated individuals by the modern impersonal and appealingly free western life style. Mrs. Pattons, an obsessive compulsive eater, stocks edibles in large measures. Her bulimic daughter, Melaine, is a 'loner' and she exhibits the gloomy lonely feeling of the affluent: "...dressed in denim shorts and a faded pink T-shirt, holding a party-sized bag of salted peanuts...she sits in the gloom of the unlit staircase, munching the nuts with mulish obstinacy...she looks sullen rather than tearful. It is her habitual expression."

(Desai, 164) The overdose of freedom and the resultant repulsion transform the environment into a stifling and phlegmatic one.

Thus whereas the women of the East could not detach themselves free from the crunching shackles of the burdensome tradition, the western women feel humiliated by the excesses of their own society. As a matter of fact, both Uma and Melaine represent two women belonging to two entirely dissimilar cultures reacting to the superfluous social customs in their own styles. But they are meek victims bereft of will power to fight against the vicious might of the existing benchmarks.

## Conclusion

History does not tell us that the discrimination of sexes subsisted in the days of Adam and Eve. "From being the very incarnation of power (Shakthi) and knowledge (Gnyan), women came to be held only as child-bearing machines and their horizons have been supposed to be confined only to their familial role." (Choubey, 195) Girls are not only less preferred but also more laden with more odd jobs. The disgrace suffered by Uma through failed marriages invalidates Simone De Beauvoir's account: "Feminists say that marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society." (Beauvoir, 445) Jana Matson Everett underscores the point that "in India, a woman is considered to be an embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge." (Everett, 76) Even the parents forget that Uma is not just a body but a soul as well. Mira-masi is the prototype of an Indian widow: "...quite alone, safe in her widow's white garments, visiting one place of pilgrimage after another like an obsessed tourist of the spirit." (Desai, 165)

In India, Mama parades taciturn submission to Papa and follows all his whims and idiosyncrasy meekly and in Massachusetts, Mrs. Patton is identically servile while Melaine Patton is a victim of parental indifference.

Thus, *Fasting, Feasting* is an arraignment against men who believe in holding their women in their vice like clutch, it is an avowal against women who are conceited of their servility and an impeachment against men who trade in marriages as means of mounting money and power. Thus the novel is multicultural in outlook with tirades against male-bigotry, lackadaisical attitude of females and also their disinclination.

Any society in a whirlpool of change breeds many negative feelings in the oppressed women—alienation, anxiety, insecurity, fear etc. These women pine for adjustment and readjustment. But, while tussling with problems and refusing to accept the life of repression, the positive compromising attitude, they settle on living life in their own way. This awakening of the consciousness and not making any attempt to arrive at a straight forward solution are their potency in their ceaseless battle to trounce the stronghold of male ascendancy. This faculty to endure the domestic injustice and the institutionalized tyranny unseat the myths of femininity, motherhood and marriage. This is also what the Dravidian culture is all about. It is highly pertinent to recall the ire of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy at this juncture: "We recommend that women should stop delivering children altogether because conception stands in the way of women enjoying personal freedom." (Ramasamy, 45)

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## Book Reviews

**Angelika Malinar, *The Bhagavadgītā: Doctrines and Contents*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, Pp. 296.**

Angelika Malinar has made an adventurous effort in dealing with the critical perspectives of *BG*, the most significant text composed during the Sunga dynasty (1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C.) for founding the Brahmanic ideology, in all its cultural perspectives, strongly against the voracity of Buddhism that had been swallowing up the Vedic heritage with its omnivorous spread all over the vast area of the sub-continent and with its daring jaws expanding much beyond it. Its anti-castism that attracted the common people soon found an orthodox counter in the Bhāgavata/Sātvata religion with a non-Vedic deity Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa its ruling lord and propagator. A Brahmin sage, son of one Devakī, Kṛṣṇa of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad was converted to a member of a pastoral tribe (might be vaiya in caste and profession), called sātvata believed to be an incarnation of the Vedic God Viṣṇu/Nārāyaṇa with a purpose to destroy evil and protect virtue, an incarnation on par with other anthropomorphic incarnations of Viṣṇu such as Paraūrām (a Brahmin) and Rāma (a Warrior). This Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva (son of Vāsudeva the Sātvata/Vṛṣṇi/Yādava) was worshipped along with some other members of this tribe, viz., Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Viūvaksena. Those who worshipped only Vāsudeva among these members were called *ekāntins* (those who aim at only one), and philosophers like S.N. Dasgupta hold that *BG* was composed by those *ekāntins* because the text says that only Vāsudeva is the highest divinity among the Vṛṣṇis/Sātvatas/Yādavas (X). Although the text is ascribed to one Vyāsa, believed to be the celebrated author of the *MBh.* and all other *Purāṇas* (not "epic" as it is understood in the Western literary vocabulary, composed during a millennium and a half since the composition of the *MBh.*, its historical author is anonymous, and its very title *Srīmadbhagavadgītā* an adjective of the "Upaniṣad" (feminine gender in Sanskrit) forming thus the complete title *Ūrīmadbhagavadgītōpaniṣad* clarifies that the text is a song sung by the "divinity" himself, i.e., Bhagavān Vāsudeva.

But surprisingly, although both Pāṇini (4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.) and Patañjali (2<sup>nd</sup> c. B.C.) seem to be aware of the divinity of one Vāsudeva, they never mention the existence of this text as sung by him. Thus historically, this text is associated neither with Vyāsa as its composer, nor with Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa its singer. Obviously, the Brahmanic patrons of the Suṅga dynasty appointed a group of great thinkers for composing this text ascribing it to Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa the most popular Bhāgavata deity of the time, so that its message be considered as divine as that of the Upaniṣads, and would therefore motivate both the elite and common class as the persuasive state apparatus of the Brahmanic ruler, serving as a strong counter to the outgone Buddhist advisor of the Maurya empire. Two significant points make our observations clear. *BG* puts forth its counter to Buddhism on both its merit and demerit. Whereas the Buddhist *Fire Sermon* poses fire as an image of horror of desire, *BG* converts this image to that of enlightenment that destroys this horror (*Jñānāgni*), and this enlightenment is no more confined to the Brahmins and Warriors; it is open to all—women, Vaiyās and Ūdras provided they qualify (IX). Without withdrawing its support from the performance of the Vedic rituals, it declares that meditation (*japa*) is the best kind of sacrificial life (*vajña*). The esoteric breathing exercise (*prāṇāyāma*) open to all the castes, classes and categories of the society is also effective for this enlightenment. What is most important for this enlightenment is the sincere and regular performance of one's own duties without waiting for the expected results which must be surrendered to the action itself. Action for the sake of action is the most significant slogan of the *BG* letting this slogan open for healthy debates over its implication for philosophy of action or ethics of work. The issue of "surrender" is so ambivalent that it is extremely difficult to trace any (Marxist) primitive slavery or feudalism rejecting altogether its deeper implication as the most essential means of spiritual enlightenment (or liberation) that the Buddha sought for.

Multifarious perspectives of the Brahmanic ideology such as theological, philosophical, social, political, logico-ethical, historical and spiritual are so comprehensively presented in the *BG*

that almost nothing is left out that would obstruct one's appreciation of the Brahmanic culture as a whole that was perhaps finally structured by the text for all times to come. That is why the text has been so pivotal in the history of Indian culture constantly cultivated during the classical, post-classical, medieval and modern phases of Indian history with its several commentaries and interpretation from Ēaṅkara (8<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) till the Indian nationalists and European Orientalists of the colonial period. Schools of philosophy and systems of religious and political thoughts have enormously appropriated and adapted the text for justifying and propagating their own ideas and doctrines.

Malinar feels that in spite of innumerable commentaries and interpretations there are issues that have been ignored so far; and these issues comprise the interwoven theological and philosophical frameworks that identify the cultural-historical contexts of the "Hindu" tradition. "The present study", Malinar writes, "attempts to address these and other issues through a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the text and by relating some of its doctrines to the epic, literary context in which it is embedded." (P.1) The misguided methodology apart, Malinar commits, at the very outset, two major mistakes emerge by considering *BG* as an inseparable part of the epic *Mahābhārata* and by understanding the theological mission of the text as upholding "Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa as the 'highest'" (sic: highest reality or what?) (p.2) But Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa has never been held as the highest Reality till the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (6<sup>th</sup> c. AD) excepting as a divine personality (or a man with divine qualities) and the authority of this Purāṇa in explaining the Brahmanic texts such as Upaniṣads and *Brahmasūtra* was not granted till Madhva (13<sup>th</sup> c. AD) who wrote a discourse on this Purāṇa titled *Bhāgavatātātparyanirṇaya*, and next to him, it was Ūrīdhara (14<sup>th</sup> c. AD) who philosophized the Bhāgavata religion by way of writing commentaries on *BG*, *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* treating these texts as the trilogy of this cult, which according to him, proposed the highest theological status of Kṛṣṇa (*Kṛṣṇastu bhagavān svyam*). But Ēaṅkara the first commentator on *BG* considers Kṛṣṇa as Īvara, not the Absolute Reality, Brahman but an incarnation in human form. Thus Kṛṣṇa is the highest theological Reality only in the Bhāgavata cult, not in the Brahmanic culture of which it forms a part much later appropriating *BG* as one of its authoritative text. Malinar's bringing this issue into her interpretation of *BG* is out of the context, apart from her misunderstanding of the issue itself.

Excepting the fifth doctrine out of nine that Malinar counts as preached in *BG* (pp.5-7) others are unfounded. She has failed to understand the concept of *bhakti* and several of its elements. Like many other Western scholars, Malinar has also wrongly translated the Sanskrit word *niṣkāma* as "disinterested" a misapplication of the Kantian concept absolutely erratic in the context of *BG* that instructs that a *sāttvic kartā* must perform his action with full enthusiasm (*utsāha*) and patience (*dhṛti*). He must be interested sincerely in the performance of his action. One example of the author's poverty in understanding the notion of a *bhakta* ("a loving follower of a god means to know that one belongs to the god by virtue of sharing his immortal nature as being an 'individual self' [*jīva*]...") in a long sentence (p. 11) that jumbles up ideas without any precision. She should have studied thoroughly the commentaries of Ūrīdhara for having comprehensive ideas of *bhakta* and *bhakti*. It looks extremely strange that the author cites no reference to any of the Sanskrit commentators relying wholly upon the English texts! Her linking the text structurally with the epic *MBh*, and with the Kṛṣṇa cult and *Sātvata* theology does not bear any insight because the text can be substantially studied without any reference to these two phenomena which are cited only nominally. Excepting the first and last chapters the name of Kṛṣṇa does not occur anywhere else that would refer to the Kṛṣṇa of *MBh* in person. Everywhere, the divinity speaks (*Śrībhagavān uvāca*)—hammering the pivot that the whole text is the voice of "divinity" itself.

Malinar's beating around the bush of social-cultural factors contributes little to her interpretation of the text, and ends virtually in presentation of a mass of material scattered all around like beads crying for their collection in a string. Although *BG* starts with depression (*Viśāda*) that leads to escapism to be avoided by all means in the world-war, and ends in liberation through renunciation—not resignation (*mokṣa-sanyāsa*.) where one (Arjuna simply stands for any man disinterested in the world-war) feels to have dispelled all infatuations due to ignorance and have attained wisdom by divine grace, the remaining sixteen chapters are not so structured that one would trace any systematic sequence in the development of various themes that concern the text. Themes such as action, knowledge, the nature and means of liberation are discussed unsystematically as they appear time and again here and there notwithstanding efforts made by Sanskrit commentators for correlating them systematically. Instead of highlighting the text thematically against the socio-

cultural backdrop, the author is lost in chapter-by-chapter analysis. While discussing the doctrines (in her own way "systematically") she dabbles in Kṛṣṇa-worship and Vaiṣṇava worshipping much more than highlighting the vital themes such as philosophy of action, ethics of work and liberation. The first section of this chapter titled "Conflict of Dharma" is too poor to be taken into account for guiding the reader in his understanding of *dharma* in relation to *Karma/Karma-sanyāsa*. Her understanding of *Yoga* a pivotal theme in *BG* is also very poor.

Angelika Maliner's noble efforts in presenting the message of so important a text as *BG* appear much ado about nothing because of her lack of sufficient meditation, apart from the lack of thorough acquaintance with the original Sanskrit commentaries that contribute significantly to a serious study of *BG* in the traditional history of Indian culture.

**Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, pp. 431.**

Conceptually derived from the Greek *empeiria* and Latin *experientia* the English *experience* has been used more as a means of religious knowledge than as a means of scientific or logical cognition leading to any verified or verifiable knowledge based on objective events or facts of the external world or nature. The term was rejected by the analytic philosophers of the first half of the last century, although prior to them continental philosophers acknowledged its philosophical significance. Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer and Dilthey have rescued *experience* from its conceptual crisis in their own ways, without attributing any singular or foundationalist authority to the term. During the last two decades of the last century, *experience* regains its strength in the hands of both the anti-essentialists and neo-pragmatists, and continues to draw attention of the scholars around the world (including an anthology by the present reviewer, *Art and Experience*, Westport/London: Praeger Publishers, 2003). *Experience* now reaches the peak of scholarly attention in the present work of Martin Jay whose intellectual insight has focused the European thinkers of the past three centuries with remarkable clarity. The author articulates his programme: "We will pay closest attention to those thinkers in the modern period who have put 'experience' to greatest work in their thought, while expressing the emotional intensity that allows us to call their work 'songs of experience.' Our task will be not only to explore their vocations of the term, but also explain as best we can why it has functioned with such power in their vocabularies. When and why, we shall ask, did it gain the foundational authority that makes its recent critics so uneasy? To what is the invocation of experience a response? Under what circumstances does that invocation lose its power? ...Our scope ... will be confined to British, French, German and American thinkers from many different disciplines for whom 'experience' has been an especially potent term." (p. 5)

Treated phenomenologically, *experience* covers a vast range of awareness that is both discursive and non-discursive, linguistic and non-linguistic, sensory and non-sensory spreading thereby far beyond the epistemological boundary of the epistemologists—far beyond even its religious dimension. Relevantly Dilthey is quoted by Jay, "there is no real blood flowing in the veins of the knowing subject fabricated by Locke, Hume, and Kant, but only the diluted lymph of reason as mere intellectual activity." (p.43) Thus *experience* cannot be reduced to an essentially epistemological question of empiricism and rationalism represented by these thinkers. *Experience*, understood in cognitive terms, was responsible for partition between the transcendental subject and the thing-in-itself (object) united later by the logical empiricists (Carnap) into an undifferentiated realm of sense *experience* that posed a puzzle for the analysts (Quine). It is, however, in response to this cognitive function of *experience* that two alternative approaches were made to this phenomenon in the later phase of the Western philosophical thinking—discovering different modalities of *experience* such as aesthetic, religious, political and scientific and searching for an integrated holistic *experience* superseding Kant's 'method of partition' (Dewey). Jay acknowledges the merit of such modalization that helps clarify the complexity of the stakes involved in the general appeal (see the essays by Keith Yandall and John Llewelyn in any *Art and Experience*). Keith Yandall clarifies the entire range of *experience* on the grounds of structure and contents. Structurally, there are two kinds of *experience*—intentional and non-intentional. On the basis of contents there may be several sorts of *experience* such as sensory, introspective, moral, mathematical, logical, religious and aesthetic. The last one can be treated either in terms of the art works in general or in terms of their several kinds such as pictorial, literary, musical and those of dance, drama, photography and film (see the essays by Woodfield, Stecker, McFee and Carvalho in my *Art and Experience*). The logic of the remodalities

of experience is also recommended by Jay. (p.133)

Jay's treatment of experience in the French and British Marxist traditions is an immensely valuable aid to the merit of the volume. His correlation of Althusser's notion of ideology as the "lived" experience of human existence with Eagleton's observations: "Unless reasoning springs organically from lived experience it is likely to be suspect" (pp. 199-200) and exposure of the interrelationship among Leavis, Williams, Sartre and Althusser on the notion of experience contributes significantly to our understanding of the concept. So also is his thorough exposition of the American culture of experience in the pragmatist tradition of James, Dewey and Rorty exhaustive and insightful.

The experience of the loss of experience is one of the oldest motif of Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School and this loss of experience is the loss of Romantic innocence as exemplified by Benjamin's memory of the childhood that he has communicated to Adorno (p.313). So Jay takes account of the crisis of experience in Benjamin: "Alternating between utopian hope and elegiac despair, combining theological impulses with materialist analysis, Benjamin's ruminations on the crisis of experience went beyond anything we have encountered..." (p.314) Thus Blake's songs of innocence is metamorphosed into "songs of experience" by the author most appropriately. The post-structuralist rejection of stable subject, a I continuing from the past to future through the present obviously rejects the type of all-pervading consciousness presupposed by Augustine's *Confessions*; but Lyotard reconstitutes this experience by subverting the subject-object dualism: "the world is not an entity external to the subject, it is the common name for the objects in which the subject alienates himself (loses himself, dies to himself) in order to arrive at himself, to live." (p.361) Whereas de Man rejects the reflection of experience in favour of its linguistic constitution, Derrida associates it with a metaphysics of presence, and questions if there can be an experience of the other or of difference (Prior to Jay Pierre Keller has presented a thorough analysis of human experience as observed by Husserl and Heidegger- see his Cambridge title, 1999). On the other hand, Foucault considers the phenomenological "lived experience" (*Erlebnis*) a nineteenth century fiction that restores the Cartesian ego by privileging pre-reflective experience. But he writes: "man is an animal of experience, he is involved *ad infinitum* within process that, by defining a field of objects, at the same time changes him, deforms him, transforms him and transforms him as a subject." (p.400) Finally, the author concludes, after a voluminous intellectual detour in both sides of the Atlantic spanning over several centuries that took him more than half a dozen years, that the trip is not entirely over, it involves an openness to the world that leaves behind such exhaustive fortresses.

A summary presentation of Jay's work, partial as it is, might benefit the readers in comprehending the vastness of the intellectual area that he has traveled. Evaluating comments would only appear superficial while viewing his amazingly wide range of reading, inconceivable erudition, patience and passion for pursuing knowledge for its own sake. In our age, only few can succeed Jay in reopening the openness of experience, complete the trip left incomplete by him and reach the destination unreachable for him.

**Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005, pp. 422.**

Ugliness has rather been unjustly kept out of our critical attention, in its simplistic assessment as an antonym of beauty. Where Aristotle's magic of mimesis converted ugliness to beauty, it was not without an ontological conversion although the epistemological culture of the audience played a vital role in experiencing the specific property of the converted phenomenon called beauty. What the audience experienced as beauty in a mimesis of a deadbody is the formal resemblance of a natural object worked out in a different material (though itself a natural matter) by the skill (*techni*) of the artist. There are thus two elements in this conversion: a change in the material ontology, and a cultural habit of appreciating the artistic skill of converting a form in different materials: in Aristotelian terms of causality, the efficient cause (artist) makes the same form (formal cause) in different materials/material cause). Aristotle, accordingly, does not allow any ontological status to the property called beauty that an empirical object possesses. Different cultures might exercise different epistemological habits ignoring any sense of beauty in such material conversion of a form.

In the medieval period theological criteria were adopted in considering Divine thought as beauty (Plotinus) and its opposition (shapelessness/chaos) as highness—Beauty-God/ugliness-Evil.

Augustine holds ugliness simply as an inversion of beauty. But all the time beauty refers to an epistemological practice or attitude, rather than to any ontological existence, measured out by the sensuous response of the audience: beauty yields pleasure and ugliness pain, and accordingly, there must be some objects that are neither beautiful nor ugly as they stimulate neither pleasure, nor pain. Early modern philosophers such as Hobbes, Hume and Burke appear to have subscribed to this view. In the Hegelian dialectic idealism attempt has been made to allot an ontological status to ugliness as an antithesis to beauty, and in Croce's neo-Hegelian idealism ugliness plays the role of an aesthetic counterpoint in spirit's progress to its ultimate destiny. Other idealist philosophers such as Bosanquet, Stace and Samuel Alexander consider it as an ingredient in beauty reflected as discords in music and horrors of tragedy. But along the Aristotelian interpretation, horrors of tragedy are not at all ontological entities, because in its mimetic conversion horrors of the real world have been transformed to beauty; precisely, according to this view, there is nothing ugly in art, therefore no paradox of tragedy. The Kantian philosophers have denied altogether any independent existence of ugliness. When John Keats identifies beauty with truth, it is with an epistemological view that he identifies artworks with the metaphysical entities. Like Aristotle, he also thinks that there is nothing ugly in art. On the other hand when the ugly is associated with the evil or the base, it is an ethical norm that is adopted in such realistic assessment. There might be also psychological, moral, legal and pragmatic approaches to ugliness. But in spite of the relativism encountering the relationship of beauty and ugliness, it is difficult to agree with the analytic philosophers like Guy Sircello that our gain from ugliness is the same as our gain from beauty, apart from the vagueness of the measuring of gain itself. If the gain is loaded with an experimental humanist value, then certainly both the gains are not the same. In a roundabout way we must come to the conclusion that ugliness is a relative quality that is culturally value-loaded and is judged differently in the contexts of nature and art.

But in the present work, the author uses the concept of ugliness in a specific sense—*negative/passive* emotions (feelings) such as irritation, envy, anxiety and paranoia that are politically ambiguous "in a range of cultural artifacts produced in what T.W. Adorno calls the fully 'administered world' of late modernity." In her programme for expanding the Aristotelian category of 'aesthetic emotions' (of pity and fear, or for that matter, love, anger, hatred, laughter, courage and wonder as 'counted' by the Indian aestheticians of classical antiquity) the author applies Adorno's notion of the historical origins of the artistic "autonomy art gained after having freed itself from its earlier cult function... depended on the idea of humanity. As society grew less human (this idea was shattered)... Today, however, autonomous art shows signs of being blind." (*AT* 9/1.2) Absolute freedom of art from religious, political and other social roles within an unfree society has afflicted art itself. Artistic autonomy performs an ideological function—creates the false impression that the world outside is a rounded whole. The principle of autonomy that renders art ideological, Adorno holds (contra Benjamin), also provides a precondition for art's emancipatory role. The issue thus concerns the mediation of autonomous art and advanced capitalism that causes the emergence of socio-artistic truth. On the other hand, Peter Bürger holds that 'autonomy' does not refer to any absolute detachment from society, though not socially conditioned: "The relative dissociation of the work of art from the praxis of life in bourgeois society thus becomes transferred into the erroneous idea that the work of art is totally independent of society. In the strict meaning of the term, 'autonomy' is thus an ideological category that joins an element of truth (the separateness of art from the praxis of life) and an element of untruth (the hypostatization of this fact, which is a result of historical development as the 'essence' of art."

Sianne Ngai's innovative efforts in dealing with the emotions / feelings that have been overlooked in traditional aesthetics are firmly supported by Adorno's suggestion that literature may be the ideal space in such investigation "since the situation of restricted agency from which all of them ensue is one that describes art's own position in a highly differentiated and totally commodified society keeping pace with the recent developments in expanding the horizons of aesthetic thinking—from its philosophical confinements to the spheres of political philosophy and economy—Ngai makes a courageous detour through several disciplines such as sociology of emotions in media studies in the American and global hemispheres. Philosophers, filmmakers, novelists and dramatists of both the modernist and postmodernist traditions are correlated—Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Freud, Melville, Beckett, Hitchcock and Gertrude Stein are intertwined for realizing the enormous capacity of ugly feelings to diagnose everyday life in late modernity. Ngai convincingly exposes how the sexual polarity of the Enlightenment dualism is reversed in the sociological perspectives of the late

modernity. No emotion can be tied with specific sexuality. Envy in feminism can be explained in terms of socio-historical relativism, not confined to any psychological category of a specific sexual identity.

For Ngai 'tone' is not merely a rhetorical connotation as dealt with by Richads and the New Critics. It is "a literary or cultural artifact's feeling tone: its global or organizing affect, its general disposition or orientation toward its audience and the world." Emotions can also be categorized according to their duration—long-lived or short-lived. Rage, for example, cannot be sustained indefinitely, whereas feelings like envy and paranoia, though less dramatic, are long-lived. Ngai thus deals with the seven feelings, she identifies as "ugly", animatedness, envy, irritation, anxiety, stuplimity, paranoia and disgust in a wide-ranging cultural context, ranging from contemporary feminist debates to an American cultural discourse that has found it compelling to imagine the racialized subject as an excessively emotional and expressive subject. Quite significantly she coins "stuplimity" by a "strange" amalgamation of shock and boredom, a feeling that is simultaneously stupefying and sublime.

Ngai's venture in exploring 'beauty' in mental states neglected hitherto by traditional literary critics and aestheticians is a challenging success and opens avenues for researchers in probing into the social and historical perspectives of emotions as expressed in literary and other terms of our cultural behaviour. The irony of ugliness poses a rhetorical question for the meaning of beauty examined so far in the vocabulary of traditional aesthetics.

**Roberto M. Dainotto, *Europe (In Theory)*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2007, pp. 270.**

The author acknowledges that "Indebted to the subaltern historiography of Ranajit Guha, Homi Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, as well as to the subaltern epistemology of Enrique Dussel and Walter Mignolo, *Europe (In Theory)* questions Eurocentrism not from the outside but from the marginal inside of Europe itself." Dainotto's intellectual honesty and insight are both excellent and extraordinary. The reader is simply baffled to reopen the chapters of the Anglo-German Romantic nationalism of Hegel and Husserl who projected their missions to Europeanise the whole world, whereas, as the present author lays naked, the very idea of Europe or Eurocentrism evolves out of the intellectual practices of the East. Moving in a direction opposite to Edward Said, the author excavates that, it is not William Jones' Eurocentrism that dominates the Orientalism, rather the Orientalism of the Islamic Orient, as Juan Andres, the Spanish Jesuit of the later eighteenth century, traces the Arabic origin of Europe's modernity—as a challenge to the French writer Charles Montesquieu: "If Montesquieu had claimed that as colonies of the Oriental world of Islam, the civilizations of Spain and Italy did not constitute an integral part of Europe but were its negative south, Andres was then ready to declare Al-Andalus and Sicily as the very origin of Europe's modernity—and such origin of Europe, interestingly enough, was to be located in the Orient." (P. 6)

Following Habermas' theory of identity as an opposition of the I and the Other, by which the I knows itself, one has to accept the view that the concept of Europe must have first formed as an anti-thesis to that which is not Europe—the First opposition between Europe and something that is not Europe is Asia. Europe is the anti-thesis of what Jean-Marc Mousa calls "the Orient" a vague and imaginary place that refers indifferently to any one of the three areas of an undefined geography—Asia, the Mediterranean and the Islamic territories and the space of Byzantine Christianity. (P.52) Michele Amari, an Italian writer of the 1840s even declares that far from being any antithesis to the Orient, Europe's history and civilization find their roots in the East. (P.5) Prior to Dainotto's Publication *Comparative Literature* published a special issue on the theme of the idea of Europe (58.4.2006) to which he himself contributed an article on the Arab Origin of modern Europe among eight other authors who highlighted the issue from various perspectives. Susan Suliman, the editor of this special issue of *CL* discerns two ways of considering the idea of Europe: (1) as a supranational cosmopolis in opposition to narrow, warring nationalisms and (2) Europe in opposition not to nation-states but to a non-European "other"—Asia, Africa, The "Third World" or the "non-Western" Parts (east/south) of Europe. In Romania, for example, a national self-definition as European carries an explicit condemnation of "Eastern"/Russian identity and culture, whereas, others study the shifting borders of "east" and "south" as part of central Europe's ongoing self-definition. But Dainotto insists on identifying Europe and the emergence of Eurocentrism not by setting Europe against something non-Europe, i.e., Asia in particular only—"It would be against the

logic of Eurocentrism, in fact, to form a sense of European identity by making recourse to Asia or anything outside Europe. A modern European identity, in other words, begins when the non-Europe is internalized—when the south, indeed, becomes the sufficient and indispensable *internal* other Europe, but also the negative part of it" (that refers to the countries including Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal as irrational, Corrupt and clan-based in comparison to rational, civic minded nations of northern Europe). Thus the identity of Europe emerges in setting itself against not only non-European Orient but also elements within its borders—its south. With this original insight Dainotto surveys the sources available on the issue of identifying Europe—Montesquieu's north-south division, Hegel's "two Europes" and de Stael's opposing European literatures the modern one from the North and the Pre-modern one from the south juxtaposing also with the observations of the Spanish Jesuit Andre and the Italian Orientalist Amari that the modern European culture is eastern rather than northern, and springs from the southern via Islam. Dainotto thus works out his thesis meticulously in the long five chapters of the book that exhibit his profound understanding of history and skill in correlating the material in order to build up a theoretical network.

In dealing with the idea of Europe, the special issue of *CL* noted above carries topics of diverse interest such as treading the native ground; identify discourses on borders in Eastern Europe; integration and subversion in the classical myth of the rape of Europa; Europe in comparative and world literature; Europe under the rule of Alexander and during the early modern classicism; Europe in the middle English Chronicles of the fourteenth century, the "old" and the "new" worlds or Europe reflected in literary discourses of the post world war. Avoiding this diverse reflective order, as is natural for a journal's special issue, Dainotto's single-minded study of the topic attains its desired comprehensive character with a schematized integrated structure: "an attempt to single out, in eighteenth and nineteenth-century theorizations of Europe, the surfacing of structures and paradigms that have since informed ideas of the continent and of its cultural identity." (p.4) In response to Anthony Pagden's comment (2002) that no history of Europe from 500 B.C. to the early 1700 A.D. could be written, Dainotto believes that such a history of idea of Europe could be traced while following Dipesh Chakrabarty's suggestion (2000) that history is the very thought that *produces*, as its own "sovereign, theoretical subject. In other words, writing a history of the idea of Europe is to write a history of European idea of history. Citing several sources, Dainotto observes that the Middle Ages were the childhood of Europe and during 1450-1620 the word Europe had already become part of a common linguistic usage as reflected in the words of Francis Bacon "We Europeans" although the birth of Europe could be traced back to the period of "barbarian" migrations, invasions and conquests that penetrated the Roman Empire in 330 AD founding the city of Constantinople and extended to 800 AD.

During the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Islamic invasion and the continuing warfare between the Islam and Christianity changed the idea of Europe substantially when Cordoba, Toledo and most of Spain were in the hands of Islam—the Mediterranean was replaced by the Alps as the center of new Europe that began to lose its political meaning and reduced itself to a mere religious and geographical denotation: "The moral...almost ideological content of this Europe is the Roman church", notwithstanding Charlemagne's attempts for reconstructing the warning Roman Empire into a new Holy and Roman Empire during 800-814 A.D. Charlemagne's Europe was the geographical only—the Christian one, Christendom being all moral and political meaning.

In course of time European consciousness has been dominated by the rise and fall of the nation-states of this continent—France, Germany, Britain, literatures of these states reflecting the moral and political Europe as well as shaping the theory of Europe, the Baconian European ongoing for their definite identity—who are they and what are they? The Arabist identity was neglected by the German Romantist Friedrich Schlegel who was unwilling even to accept the Arabic/Oriental admixture of the Spanish muse. Eastern Europe, Russia, Poland, Bulgaria and the Slavic states were marginalized, although the slave was counted one among the three distinct races with the Latin and German—Romance and Germanic literatures comprehended the totality of "civilized Europe". Southern Europe: Italy, Spain and Portugal—Romance, Oriental and Catholic; Northern Europe; England, Helvetia, Scandinavia and Germany—the Germanic/Western/modern and Protestant; in between north and south France was an eclipsed hegemonic power. It was for Hegel, for his Germanocentric philosophical system that the Orient was humanity's infancy. In his dialectical concept of history Eurocentrism was virtually Germanocentric that triggers the rational process of universal history.



Consequently, Oriental studies paved during the colonial period by William Jones were interpreted by the Palestine immigrant Edward Said as a conspiracy for dominating and exploiting the east's intellectual tradition. The whole perspective of Said was received with divided response—by inordinate praise or by total rejection. Significantly, Said's perspective was countered by R.K. Kaul as too marginal to be appropriate only for the Persian aspect of Orientalism whereas its Indian aspect was rich in sincere admiration for its cultural and literary heritage rather than any colonial administrative objective. Said's politicization of an academic quest might have been encouraged by his personal patriotic grievance and reaction supported by both the Marxist and Foucauldian concepts of power and systems of domination, and, therefore, might have led him to an hasty and parochial conclusion, but the southern Europeanists found in Said "a new lexicon to discuss the old facts of Europe's internal colonialism." Thus the theoretical frameworks of postcolonial and subaltern studies stimulate insights and perspectives for studying Europe (in theory) afresh. Said's indictment of the Orientalist prejudice that the Orient is primitive might have a limited scope for interpretation and appreciation of a whole location of culture, its stimulating strength for reexamination of history in some of its spatial and temporal aspects is certainly immense. Indeed, sometimes bitter experience of *personal* agony reveals the sweetest savour of universal truth.

Dainotto's narration of the history of Europe in its theoretical perspectives reads more like a historical narrative than merely a narration of history.

**A.Ch. Sukla**

**Tandra Pattnaik, *Śūnya Puruṣa: Bauddha Vaiṣṇavism of Orissa*, New Delhi: D.K. Print World (Pvt.) Ltd., 2005, pp. 268. ISBN- 812460345-6**

There is no denying the fact that the cultural history of Orissa is inextricably associated with Jagannātha Consciousness which has been variously analysed, interpreted and critically acclaimed in terms of Śaktism, Śaivism, Jainism, Buddhism, Tantricism and Vaiṣṇavism. Together with Balabhadra and Subhadrā, the wooden image Jagannātha is claimed to be the Jina of the Jainas, Ādi Buddha of the Buddhists, Rudra of the Śaivas, Bhairava of the Śaktas, Viṣṇu of the Vedāntin Vaiṣṇavas, Kṛṣṇa of the Bengal Vaiṣṇavism and Nilamādhava (*bluestoned Nārāyaṇa*) of the tribals. Despite all these associations/interpretations, the origin and development of the cult of Jagannāth is still shrouded in mystery. Whereas a coterie of scholars and critics including Monier Williams, R.L. Mitra, H.K. Mahatab emphasize the Buddhist cause behind the cult and associate the 'trinity' with the *triratna* (three jewels) of Buddhism, i.e., Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha, others interpret the trio in terms of the confluence of Śaktism, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism—Balabhadra epitomizing Śaivism, Subhadrā representing Śaktism and Jagannātha embodying the essence of Lord Viṣṇu.

The book under the cover "*Śūnya Puruṣa: Bauddha Vaiṣṇavism of Orissa*" by Tandra Pattnaik published under Utkal Studies in Philosophy (xii) is claimed to be a "pioneering study of the indigenous philosophical tradition of Orissa which evolved between the 15th-16th century A.D. and in which the author has brought to limelight the 'wonderful syncretism of Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism' as embodied in the concept of 'Śūnya Puruṣa'. No doubt, after the publication of *Santha Sāhitya* (1982) by C.R. Das, *The Cult of Jagannātha* (1984) and *Odissi Vaiṣṇava Dharma* (1990) by K.C. Mishra and *Jagannātha Revisited* (2001) by Hermann Kulke (et al) the book under question is an invaluable addition to the treasure house of Jagannātha consciousness in relation to Buddhist orientation to Vaiṣṇavism.

While regretting in her 'prologue' the fact that 'the culture, philosophy and literature of Orissa have been pushed to the oblivion' (p. viii), by scholars and researchers, the author, herself a university teacher by philosophy, has made an indepth analysis of the philosophical and religious nuances/implications of the indigenous Santha tradition of Orissa accommodating the philosophy of the Oriya Santhas like Achyutānanda (*Śūnya Samhitā*, *Aṅakara Samhitā* and *Sūrya Samhitā Tīkā*), Balarāma (*Virāṭa Gītā*, *Brahmāṇḍa Bhūgola*), Jagannātha (*Tūla Bhīṇā*), Chaitanya (*Nirguṇa Mahātmya*), Dvarakā (*Parase Gītā* and *Chatīśā-Gupta Gītā*) and Bhima Bhoi (*Stuṭi Cintāmaṇi* and *Brahma Nirupāṇa Gītā*). She is candid to express the difficulty in tracing the exact philosophical affiliations of the *Santha* tradition of Orissa. For, the Orissan Santha tradition appears to be Vaiṣṇavite in form, yet it has virtually nothing in common with the tenets of *bhakti* as propounded in various *bhakti sūtras* of Nārada and Saṅḍilya and other authoritative texts like the *Gītā* and

*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Being self-proclaimed Vaiṣṇavas, these Oriya Santhas acclaim Lord Jagannātha as the Viṣṇu-incarnate and at the same time portray Jagannātha as nameless, formless (*Śūnya dehī*) void, i.e, Śūnya Puruṣa. Saguṇa-bhakti is as such directed towards a lovable personal Lord before whom the devotee surrenders through ritualistic worship reminiscent of the nine fold devotion (*navadhā-bhakti*) of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. But, as Pattnaik rightly points out, "these santhas strictly adhere to bhakti as a means of God-realization" not in terms of emotional attachment as in Alvārs or Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, but as a matter of Yogic realization done in consonance with body (*piṇḍa*) and the Cosmos (*brahmāṇḍa*). The author therefore tenaciously tries to associate Jagannātha with the theory of *Śūnya Puruṣa* and makes an exhaustive analysis of the philosophy of 'Śūnya' (void)—layers of Śūnya, Śūnya Puruṣa as the potential womb of the Saṁsāra (phenomenal world) and Jiva (soul), Piṇḍa and Brahmāṇḍa theory, the theory of creation (*Śrṣṭi tattva*) and Jagannātha as Śūnya Puruṣa—in cause of her analysis of the Jagannātha consciousness and Vaiṣṇavism, Buddhism and Santha tradition in Orissa in Part One of the book.

Whereas Part One of the book is devoted to the cultural milieu in which Jagannātha consciousness, Buddhism, Vaiṣṇavism and Santha tradition grew in Orissa, Part Two titled as "Philosophical Concepts" deals in detail with the theoretical/philosophical and religious implications of *Śūnya Puruṣa* and devotion oriented on knowledge (*Jñānamiśra bhakti*). A special attraction of Part Two of the book is the portion on "Sudrabhāva" which envisages the concept of equality (*Samatā*) and the dream of a casteless society which not only enriches the Jagannātha consciousness, but also points to the vital fact that 'Orissa continues to remain one of the states of India least affected by communal tension and religious fundamentalism.(p. 228) Last but not the least, the two Appendixes—(i) 'Śūnyapuruṣa in relation to the Dharma Ṭhākura of the Dharma cult of Bengal' and (ii) 'The Buddhist Archaeological Heritage of Orissa'— shows how the author has heroically discarded the claims of N.N. Basu, H.P. Sastri and P. Mukherjee that 'The dharma-cult had largely been responsible for the development of the Śūnya-centric Vaiṣṇava cult of Orissa' (p. 236) with a view to justifying the fact that the Buddhist heritage of Orissa has been admittedly assimilated into the very social life of the common Orissan people as evident from the philosophy, literature, history, culture and archaeological evidences of the soil.

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## Books Received

### Current Publications by Cambridge University Press, Cambridge during 2007.

Margareta de Grazia, *'Hamlet' without Hamlet*, Pp. 267.

Ira B. Nadil, *The Cambridge Introduction to Ezra Pound*, Pp. 148.

Janette Dillon, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Tragedies*, Pp. 169.

Emma Smith, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare*, Pp. 166.

Neville Morley, *Trade in Classical Antiquity*, Pp. 118.

Marrianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre*, Pp. 365.

David Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam*, Pp. 206.

David Bradshaw (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster*, Pp. 287.

Tom Mac Faul, *Male Friendship in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, Pp. 222.

Jonathan R. Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Cultures in East Germany*, Pp. 377.

Peter Jones, *Reading Ovid: Stories from the Metamorphoses*, Pp. 272.

Noah Lemos, *An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, Pp. 232.

Katherine Crawford, *European Sexualities: 1400-1800*, Pp. 246.

Timothy Larsen and Daniel J. Treier (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, Pp. 303.

Kieran Dolin, *A Critical Introduction to Law and Literature*, Pp. 263.

Marina MacKay, *Modernism and World War II*, Pp. 192.

Caroline Vout, *Power and Eroticism in Imperial Rome*, Pp. 285.

H.A. Shapiro (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Archaic Greece*, Pp. 303.

May Sim, *Remastering Morals with Aristotle and Confucius*, Pp. 224.

Gill Plain and Susan Sellers (eds.), *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism*, Pp. 352.

Roger S. Bagnall (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World*, Pp. 464.

Michael Friedman and Rechara Creath (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Carnap*, Pp. 371.

John K. Grande, *Dialogues in Diversity: Art from Marginal to Main Stream*. Sas, Italy: Pari Publishing, 2007. Pp. 173.